This Small Spot

A Narrative History of Selected World Civilizations to 1800s

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"How vast those Orbs must be, and how inconsiderable this Earth, the Theatre upon which all our mighty Designs, all our Navigations, and all our Wars are transacted, is when compared to them. A very fit consideration, and matter of Reflection, for those Kings and Princes who sacrifice the Lives of so many People, only to flatter their Ambition in being Masters of some pitiful corner of this small Spot."

—Christiaan Huygens, Dutch Astronomer, *The Immense Distance Between the Sun and the Planets*, 1698.

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PREFACE

The conceptualization of this text is simple: to provide an inexpensive clearly-written concise narrative of selected world civilizations accessible to High School or College lower-division students combining punctuated factual detail that allows teachers to pursue in greater detail those historical themes of their own choosing and background.

Learn, Love, and Live.

David D. Peck, PhD, 2016

Part I

Origins of Western Civilization

CHAPTER 1

The First Civilizations of the West

> The march of humanity … develops indubitably in the direction of a conquest of matter put to the service of the mind: increased power for increased action. But finally, and above all, increased action for increased being.
>
> —Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*

Introduction

Almost every discussion of Western civilization focuses upon the abiding contributions of the ancient Greeks and Romans. That does not mean, however, that classical Greeks (see chapter 2) or Romans (see chapter 3) created Western civilization. The "march of humanity," as Chardin called the progression of civilization, began long before the first peoples known as Greeks appeared. Furthermore, the history of civilization is rather directly tied to the history of human technologies, or as Chardin stated, the "conquest of matter put to the service of the mind: increased power for increased action." Several indispensable civilizing technologies existed long before the appearance of Greek-speaking peoples in the regions of the Aegean Sea. These ancient civilizing technologies included stone and metalworking, language and writing, government and administration, religion and art. The story of Western civilization began with the emergence of such primitive technologies—in some cases long before the founding of the first cities and kingdoms, the first vestiges of civilization, in the West.

This chapter discusses the emergence of Western civilization, beginning with prehistoric stone toolmaking and continuing through the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Persia. The abiding contributions of these earlier civilizations are noted, but perhaps more importantly, readers may come to recognize the overarching patterns of civilization drawn from the ancient past that are evident in the Western world today.

The Ages of Humanity

Historians—unsurprisingly—often narrate the story of humanity on its broadest scale, as the story of technological progress. History is consequently often divided into technological ages, representing the ages of human civilization. Because the periods of time involved are immense when compared to the modern use of year, month, or day, historians and scientists have developed a special terminology that we will use here: MYA means "Millions of Years Ago", and KYA means "Thousands of Years Ago"). The first part of this chapter uses both of those acronyms. Be aware, however, that others use the abbreviation "BP," meaning "Before the Present."

Danish archeologist Christian Jürgensen Thompson (1788–1865) created a widely used three-stage system for classifying ancient human history along technological lines:

- Stone Age (2 MYA–5.5 KYA)
- Bronze Age (5.5–3.2 KYA)

- Iron Age (3.2 –0.5 KYA)

The date ranges are not hyper-accurate, but represent a conceptualization of the ancient past based upon broad periods in the development of key technologies that allowed humans to develop culture and, eventually, civilization. Historians have added other ages to Thompson's list, describing more recent human developments:

- Industrial Age/Age of Industrialization (1750–1900, see chapter 8)
- Age of Information/Space Age/Atomic Age (1900 to the present, see chapter 9 and the conclusion)

Each age of human history is associated with some characteristic and fundamental technology or technologies: stone, bronze (an alloy made mostly of copper and tin), and iron (which required new forges to heat the metal to much higher temperatures in order to purify it). The period of time covered in this chapter (from 80,000 to about 500 BC) is discussed within Thompson's familiar three-ages scheme.

The Stone Age

Historians generally classify the period from 2.5 million years ago to 5,500 KYA ("Thousands of Years Ago") as the Stone Age. Stone tool making characterized this period, together with its related impact on human social organization. The Stone Age is further subdivided into the Paleolithic, the Mesolithic, and the Neolithic eras. The Paleolithic era (meaning the "Old Stone Age") lasted from about 2.5 MYA ("Millions of Years Ago") to about 40,000 KYA and was characterized by the manufacture of stone hand axes. The Mesolithic era (meaning "Middle Stone Age", also called the Upper-Paleolithic) lasted from about 40,000 BC until about 10,000 BC, or the end of the last major Ice Age, and witnessed new technologies, such as stone scrapers and projectile weapons (principally primitive spears). By this time, cooking food—a hallmark of genus *Homo*, was ubiquitous. This same period witnessed the emergence of figurative art, located in many places including caves such as Chauvet in Modern France, or Altamira in modern Spain. In addition to cooking and art, human language as we now know it developed, primarily through an evolved larynx with a special bone, called the Hyoid, which allowed for much more exact and delicate sound production, a necessary precursor to modern speech—definitely for modern humans (*Homo sapiens*), and possibly for Neanderthals who shares a more primitive form of the Hyoid.

About 200 KYA a new species of hominid evolved: *Homo sapiens*. *Homo sapiens* exhibited all of the characteristics of pre-modern humans, including tool making. Later, at the beginning of the Mesolithic period, the first human hunter-gatherer societies formed. By the time the Mesolithic era ended, the first semi-settled agricultural communities formed. Historians speak of the emergence of language and culture near the end of the Mesolithic (or Upper Paleolithic as the period is increasingly called), such as the Natufian culture of the ancient Near East. Significant as these collective achievements were, they pale when compared to the steady and profound technological advancements of the Neolithic era, the period when the core building blocks of civilization were created.

Neolithic Revolutions

The Neolithic Age lasted in the Near East from the end of the last Ice Age (about 10,000 BC) until about 3500 BC. Technological advancements made during the Neolithic Era successfully addressed two fundamental human needs, both of which are necessary for the establishment of complex societies and civilizations: first, a reliable source of healthy foods, and second, a reliable supply of potable water. The progressive domestication of animals and plants addressed food-related needs. During this time, the first animals were domesticated, as were the first plants, meaning that they were brought under human control, cultivation, and harvesting. Between 12 and 8.5 KYA, wheat, barley, beans, peas, and similar plants were domesticated successfully in the Near East. By about 7 KYA, cattle, goats, pigs, and chickens were domesticated. This process is referred to as the Neolithic Agricultural Revolution and is considered to be the period of the most profound technological innovation in history. As we will learn in subsequent chapters, other regions of the world underwent (the African Sahel region, Mesoamerica, and New Guinea, for example) underwent their own agricultural "revolutions. Nevertheless, and without disparaging other agricultural revolutions elsewhere, the Neolithic Near-Eastern model, developed between 12 KYA and 8.5 KYA has come to dominate global agriculture and is often viewed as "the" agricultural revolution. In a very real sense, agriculture around the globe hasn't changed much in its basic techniques and methods. Almost any changes are in the nature of increased agricultural intensity (greater yields per acre, for example), or in complexity (field rotations and the use of machinery). The intensification and complexification of agriculture are discussed in later chapters.

Village life was a hallmark of the Near eastern Neolithic Agricultural Revolution. Neolithic agricultural techniques grew out of the hunter-gatherer social inheritance of the Mesolithic: seminomadic groups used slash-and-burn agriculture, which eventually gave way to permanent farms and related food-storage methods and facilities. These developments were combined with the increased building of sedentary, permanent, buildings: Homes and other buildings found in villages and cities across the globe. Although semi-permanent settlements date back into the Mesolithic/Upper Paleolithic, the first permanent villages are Neolithic, including impressive villages of thousands of inhabitants such as Çatalhöyük (pronounced Chataal-hoo-YOOK) on the central plateaus of Asia Minor, cofounded sometime around 8 KYA. Many distinctive social characteristic, such as the concept of the family, were strongly influenced by pre-existing hunter-gatherer tribal associations. Agriculture produced profound changes, however, in social arrangements between families and tribes. Land ownership introduced a new concept: private property, that is, not "owned" by the tribe as a whole, and, the need to protect the investment of time and energy in developed fields and crops using such techniques as building protective walls around villages, with the first walls being built around the village of Jericho about 10 KYA. Finally, new forms of governance such as proto-monarchs, and laws protecting private property rights were created, particularly toward the end of the Neolithic.

Toward the end of the Neolithic, newly established settled communities with permanent field cultivation appeared throughout the Near East, and by 8 KYA, the first large-scale granaries were built. The invention of pottery making and ceramics provided storage for wine and oil. Each of these activities evolved into forms of specialized labor. Instead of spending the majority of their time growing, processing, and storing food, or hunting, professional potters who specialized in making pottery likely emerged, trading finished pots and other earthenware for food or clothing. Although trade and barter long predated the Neolithic, bartering became an essential feature of village, and then of city, life. As village life and civilization progressed, so

did specialized labor: Coopers to make barrels, wheelwrights to make wheels, wainwrights to make wagons, and blacksmiths making the necessary implements for agriculture and many other inventions.

By the end of the Neolithic humans (meaning specifically H. sapiens, the sole survivors of genus *Homo*) were in general much better off materially than their hunter-gatherer ancestors, at least in terms of a more steady food supply. Scholars today debate the comparative benefits of a more natural and unprocessed "paleo-diet," one that the human body adapted to over millions of years of evolution and change. Nevertheless, it is no overstatement to say that agriculture was a necessary prerequisite to the rise of civilization. The profound social, legal, and governmental changes begun in the Neolithic are still with us today.

In a very real way, we are doing the same basic things that Neolithic peoples did, just more intensively and with greater complexity. For example, heat from a cooking fire involves carbon combustion, and the gas-engine in the average automobile involves the same basic process of carbon combustion. Not much has truly changed. In light of data and argument about the global impact of Neolithic practices an increasing number of scientists (of all areas of research) are concerned that the old ways must give way to new forms of energy extraction, government, and food production. AS you read further about world civilization, we invite you to keep these points in mind as you consider what kind of world you would like to inherit.

The Age of Metals

Without the mastery of metalworking, there would be no civilization—at least not as we now know it. Think for a moment about how much of your world involves metals in one form or another. The origins of metallurgy stretch into the distant past, and one can imagine how early humans found stone useful—first as weapons and later as tools—but imagining how the first human decided that melting rocks would somehow make the world a better place poses a serious conundrum. Whoever discovered the uses of metals and however it was done, metalwork soon became essential to technological progress beyond its comparatively limited beginnings in stone.

The Bronze Age

The Bronze Age, a period in which civilizations relied upon bronze smelting and related technologies, lasted in the Near East from about 2800 to about 1200 BC. The technologies associated with the smelting and casting of metals emerged in Mesopotamia sometime around 6000 BC. The first efforts at metalworking involved softer metals with lower melting points, such as gold and copper. However, the very qualities that allowed gold and copper to be smelted made them inadequate for more demanding uses. By about 4000 BC, bronze was invented. Bronze is an alloy (an amalgam of more than one metal) made primarily from tin and copper. It is more durable than either and is comparatively resistant to corrosion, including saltwater corrosion (many ship propellers continue to be cast in bronze to this day). It was used to cast fittings for ships, hinges for doors and gates, and wheel hubs for chariots and for weaponry. The advent of bronze smelting played an important role in the emergence of civilization.

By the third millennium BC, nearly every society moving toward civilization used bronze. Obtaining the ores and the expertise necessary to work bronze posed a significant challenge, however. First of all, the knowledge and techniques of metal casting were guarded,

and metal smiths customarily behaved as quasi priests, in some cases requiring religious initiation into their ranks before sharing their knowledge. Second, tin is rare compared to copper; consequently, societies short on tin had to engage in long-distance trade to manufacture bronze. Third, bronze melts at about 1,700ºF—depending on the ratio of alloys—requiring the construction and maintenance of high-temperature smelting furnaces. Consequently, bronze smelting and related technologies (such as mining) required a more specialized labor, prompted the establishment of sustained regional trade and economic exchange for the first time, and necessitated construction of permanent settlements with forges. Although Mesopotamia mastered bronze working first, by 2800 BC all four "hydraulic" (see below) civilizations had mastered the craft to one degree or another, justifying the connection between bronze-related technologies and the rise of civilization.

The Iron Age

Sometime toward the last half of the second millennium BC, a new type of smelting forge, called a *bloomery*, was invented. The bloomery provided the significantly elevated temperatures necessary to smelt and purify iron (2,795°F). Iron, like bronze, can be cast—that is, it can be melted, poured into a mold, and finished. Iron, however, may also be forged. Forging involves a process of repeated heating and cooling of the metal, combined with shaping and hardening by a blacksmith using a hammer and anvil. Forged iron had several notable advantages over cast bronze (or even cast iron): forged iron parts such as wheel hubs and door hinges maintained their true shape longer than bronze counterparts; iron tools were less brittle, had higher tensile strength, and were more flexible; and iron weapons held an edge longer. Although bronze casting continued through the Iron Age (1200–500 BC), emerging kingdoms depended upon incorporation of iron technologies and iron-related benefits. The biblical book of Judges, for example, indicates the military edge gained through the use of iron technologies: "They [the men of Judah] took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had *chariots fitted with iron*" (Judges 1:19 NIV, emphasis added).

"Hydraulic" Civilizations

By 4000 BC, the fundamental agricultural and metal-based technologies discussed above appeared in the Indus River Valley (primarily located in modern Pakistan) and by 2500 BC had made their way as far west as the British Isles. The first cities, however, appeared around rivers in the Near East, where irrigation-based agriculture capable of sustaining a large population was invented. The region of Mesopotamia (meaning "land between rivers") was the first to build and form a cohesive civilization. Egypt, the "gift of the Nile" as the Greek historian Herodotus later called it, followed shortly after, almost contemporaneously. By about 2000 BC, four foundational civilizations had been founded near major rivers and fertile plains in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and along the Yellow River in China. These are termed "hydraulic civilizations" due to their proximity to rivers and their use of irrigation and wet-farming techniques. The hydraulic civilizations mastered metalworking, in addition to essential agricultural techniques. Because Mesopotamia and Egypt are central to the story of Western civilization, we will focus on them.

Mesopotamia: The Cradle of Civilization

The region of Mesopotamia comprises the land bounded by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and their confluence, essentially following the borders of modern Iraq. Because the earliest civilizations are thought to have emerged there, historians call the region the "cradle of civilization," meaning the place where civilization was born and nurtured into maturity. Beginning in about 3500 BC, the land was first ruled by smaller city-states, then a series of kingdoms, and finally by the Persians (who originated outside Mesopotamia).

Mesopotamian civilization began with a people known as the Sumerians. Inhabiting the southern regions of the Tigris-Euphrates river valley, they founded several important cities in the area, such as Uruk (ca. 4000 BC) and Ur (ca. 3800 BC). These cities functioned as religious centers, provided markets and promoted trade, and offered increased protection for the inhabitants. The Sumerians are widely credited with the invention of several basic technologies associated with the rise of civilization: the wheel (as early as 5500 BC), the sail (ca. 3000 BC), writing (ca. 3000 BC), the "seeder plow" (ca. 2000 BC), and a numerical system eventually based upon the number sixty (ca. 2500 BC), associated today with the 360º circle and with time—sixty seconds and sixty minutes. The Sumerians are also thought to have been the first to master the technologies of metalworking (mining, smelting, casting, and crafting) that eventually ended the Stone Age and moved civilization into what is known as the Bronze Age (3500 to 1200 BC).

Kingdoms of Mesopotamia

By the early Bronze Age, numerous city-states arose in Mesopotamia, several with perhaps familiar names: Ur, Babylon, Damascus, Jericho, and Nineveh. Beginning as isolated villages, they became increasingly interconnected, particularly as local irrigation works multiplied within the larger Tigris-Euphrates aquifer. The rivers themselves became regional highways along which goods were increasingly exchanged, providing for better diet and occasional luxuries. The managerial sophistication and planning required to establish and govern the emerging cities encouraged the development of local monarchies, aristocracies, and supporting bureaucracies. Competition for water, food, and natural resources increased over time, and city walls and defensive towers became more common in the effort to protect one city from another. It was only a matter of time before one city conquered the others and created a regional kingdom. In fact, as the following list of kingdoms illustrates, Mesopotamia's open plains proved relatively easy to conquer but comparatively difficult to hold.

Akkad (2337–2154 BC)

During the third millennium BC, the city-states of Mesopotamia expanded, creating tension and, eventually, outright conflict. Sargon the Great (r. 2337–2279), ruler of Akkad, conquered nearby walled cities, bringing them under a single rule and creating what may be considered the world's first multicity kingdom. From his home city of Akkad, located in south-central Mesopotamia, he conquered the nearby city-states of Ur, Uruk, and Lagash, as well as regions as far away as the Mediterranean Sea in the west and the Persian Gulf in the southeast. Sargon's sons succeeded him as kings, establishing the dynastic principle of royal succession, and the Kingdom of Akkad lasted until 2154 BC.

Babylonia (1792–1157 BC)

The city-state of Babylon had been long overshadowed by its more powerful neighbors. But under its sixth king, Hammurabi (r. 1792–1750), it conquered several neighboring cities and established itself as the premier regional power, ruled thereafter by a series of capable dynasties. Perhaps the most famous innovation associated with Babylonia was the written legal corpus known as the Code of Hammurabi. Hammurabi inscribed a coherent set of laws in cuneiform upon stone *stellae* (pillars) and placed them throughout his kingdom. The code consisted of 282 laws. The subjects covered reveal the increasing complexity of Mesopotamian civilization during the Babylonian period: contracts (complex commercial arrangements and compensations for breach of contract), marriage and divorce, construction lawsuits (e.g., compensation for a house that collapses following construction by a professional builder), and the removal of a corrupt judge. Although probably not invented by Hammurabi, the code is famous for its well-known formulation of *lex talionis* (the law of retribution): "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Although the stellae differ from region to region, the most famous, the "diorite stele," now housed in the Louvre museum in Paris, resembles an upward-pointing index finger. At the apex, or "fingernail," Hammurabi is shown receiving the law directly from the sun god Shamash, the divine source of justice. The Code of Hammurabi exerted a profound influence upon subsequent western legal codes down through the ages until the present. The kingdom begun by Hammurabi is often called "Old Babylonia" to distinguish it from the Chaldean Kingdom (or Neo-Babylonian Kingdom, below).

The Hittite Kingdom (1430–1180 BC)

The Hittite people long inhabited Asia Minor, or Anatolia as it was known in ancient times. Among the early masters of iron forging, the Hittites moved southward into Mesopotamia in the fifteenth century, establishing a regional kingdom that competed with the Egyptian state under Pharaoh Ramesses II (see below). The Egyptian and Hittite armies met in battle in 1274 BC at Qadesh, a city on the Orontes River located in modern Lebanon. The battle at Qadesh was the first battle for which historical records exist detailing military tactics and formations. It was perhaps the largest chariot battle in history (as many as six thousand chariots were used). Although the battle was technically a draw without a clear victor, the Hittite Kingdom declined over the next century, whereas Egypt endured.

Assyria (911–605 BC)

The city of Nineveh, built according to the Bible by either Nimrod or Ashur (second son of Shem and grandson of biblical Noah), was the home city of the Assyrian people (Genesis 10:11). Archaeologists and historians studying its ruins near modern Mosul (Iraq) draw differing conclusions as to its origins. Being worshippers of Ashur, the god of war, the Assyrians assembled the most formidable military force to that date. Under a series of capable rulers such as Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883–859) and Shalmanaser III (r. 858–823), the kingdom extended westward to the Mediterranean Sea and southward to Babylon. The ruler Tiglath-Pileser III (r. 745–727) conquered the kingdom of Israel and threatened Jerusalem with vassalage. An inscription describes his sacking of Damascus in 731:

> I captured [the ruler Rezin's] warriors, archers, and lance-bearers; and I dispersed their battle-array. [Rezin], in order to save his life, fled alone, and he entered the gate of his city [like] a mongoose; I impaled alive his chief ministers; and I made his country behold them.… I destroyed 591 cities of 16 districts of Damascus like mounds of ruins after the Deluge (Keller, 260).

The Assyrian Kingdom reached its territorial zenith with the conquest of Egypt by Ashurbanipal (r. 668–c. 627), making the Assyrian state the largest up to that time. Ashurbanipal established an important library (called the Library of Ashurbanipal) located among the ruins of Nineveh. Over thirty thousand cuneiform clay tablets still exist, providing a wealth of archaeological and historical information. The subjects covered on the tablets include commercial transactions and administrative records, as well as texts containing the Mesopotamian creation myth, the *Enuma Elish*, as well as the famous *Epic of Gilgamesh* (below). At the Battle of Carchemish (605 BC), a coalition of Babylonians and Medes decisively defeated the combined armies of Assyria and Egypt, ending the kingdom.

Chaldea (also called Neo-Babylonia, 626–539 BC)

Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562), perhaps the most famous of Chaldean kings, inherited the most stable post-Assyrian state in Mesopotamia. His fame rests upon the massive public-building projects that elevated Babylon to legendary stature that he undertook following his conquest of Jerusalem. His rule inaugurated the period known as the Neo-Babylonian Renaissance, during which time the famous (but perhaps purely legendary) Hanging Gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, were built. Nebuchadnezzar II commissioned the massive ziggurat associated with the Temple of Marduk, thought by some to be the structure that inspired the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. The famous Ishtar Gate, a rebuilt portion of which is located in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, was commissioned in 575 BC by royal decree. Following battles with Egypt and Arab tribes, Nebuchadnezzar II conquered Jerusalem in 597, placing Jehoiachin on the throne. Jehoiachin's successor, Zedekiah of Judah, was encouraged by continuing battles between the Chaldeans and the Egyptians, and revolted, leading to an eighteen-month siege and the capture of Jerusalem in 587. Nebuchadnezzar took thousands of its inhabitants to Babylon and razed the Temple of Solomon, beginning the so-called Babylonian captivity. The last Chaldean king, Nabonidus (556–539), was too weak to resist an invasion from the east by the Persians under Cyrus the Great in 539 BC, which ended Chaldean rule.

Mesopotamian Civilization

By the end of the Chaldean Kingdom, the fundamental elements of civilization were in place and in key respects survived relatively unchanged to the present. The Akkadians and subsequent rulers of Mesopotamia either invented or improved upon several core civilizing technologies, including writing and record-keeping, mathematics and engineering, trade and commerce, and religion and religious architecture.

Government

Kingdoms were much larger than the early city-states and required a trained professional administration. Bureaucrats and scribes kept official records upon clay tablets using the cuneiform—"wedge-shaped"—writing system. Cuneiform writing spread throughout Mesopotamia and was used for nearly two millennia until it was replaced by phonetic alphabet systems.

Engineering

The Mesopotamians invented an advanced system of irrigation and related hydraulic engineering designed to increase and stabilize the food supply required to operate a kingdom. The hydraulic system both reduced damage caused by flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and brought a more reliable supply of all-important water to agricultural lands. The resulting increase in the food supply allowed for an increase in population and a subsequent increase in specialized labor.

Economics

The Mesopotamian kingdoms engaged in trade and commerce across a broad geographical zone, from India to the Mediterranean Sea. Akkad, for example, had a surplus of grains and other foodstuffs, and through conquest, acquired aromatic and rot-resistant cedarwood from the area of Lebanon as well as copper deposits near Magan (possibly located near modern Oman). These were traded for other metals, building stone, and even luxury items such as lapis lazuli. River-based and oceangoing trade dominated, although Sargon the Great was known for having developed roads and even a postal system. Merchants kept records on clay tablets, including contracts and warehouse receipts. Historians have learned much about daily life from such commerce-related records.

Religion

The Mesopotamians were polytheistic—that is, they believed in a somewhat coherent collection of gods and goddesses that controlled natural powers and accounted for the creation and maintenance of the universe. The Sumerian pantheon, which the kingdoms of the Akkadians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans inherited and adapted, shows a remarkable uniformity, although the various peoples of the region often used different names for these gods. In order to avoid confusion, the Akkadian names will be used here to describe the Mesopotamian pantheon. The four primary gods and goddesses were *Anu*—god of the heavens, whose symbol is a star; *Ea*—god of water, particularly the oceans, whose symbol is two serpents entwined on a wooden staff; *Ishkur*—god of rain and wind, responsible for a flood that nearly destroyed humankind; and *Ninurta*—goddess of earth, agriculture, and childbirth, also known as Queen of the Mountains. Additionally, there were the "Seven Who Decree Fate," two of whom receive special mention here: *Innana*—goddess of love, fertility, passion, the beasts, and war (she was also known as Ishtar, Astarte, and even Esther among the other peoples of Mesopotamia), and *Utu*—god of the sun and the source of justice, also known as Shamash.

These deities were, in turn, supplemented by a host of demigods and heroes. For example, Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, was among the most enduring demigods. His story was passed down through nearly all of the kingdoms of Mesopotamia over a period of thousands of

years and is known today as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Semidivine, Gilgamesh was the fifth king from the time of a universal flood that Mesopotamians believed nearly destroyed humankind. Through a series of adventures, Gilgamesh and his loyal friend Enkidu offended the goddess Ishtar, who exacted revenge by smiting Enkidu with mortal illness. Enkidu's death brought home the reality of Gilgamesh's own mortality. Determined to defeat humankind's universal mortal fate, Gilgamesh set out upon a quest to find immortality. He traveled beyond the known limits of the earth, through a mountain guarded by scorpion men and through the gardens of paradise, abounding with jeweled fruits tended by the maiden Siduri. Gilgamesh learned from Siduri that to obtain immortality, that is, to avoid death altogether and live forever, he must visit the legendary patriarch Utnapishtim, the man who built the boat that saved his family and all animal life from a universal flood. Gilgamesh crossed the ocean and found Utnapishtim, who told him of a flower at the bottom of a lake, which, if eaten, would result in immortality. Gilgamesh secured the flower, but rather than eating it on the spot, he decided to take it back to Uruk and share it with all of his people. Being part mortal, however, immortality was not his fate. On the way back, he fell asleep in his boat, and a serpent emerged from the depths of the water and stole back the flower, confirming that immortality is denied to humans and that Gilgamesh and all humans are fated to die.

Historians and scholars of religion often describe Mesopotamian religion as "pessimistic," evidenced in part by Gilgamesh's inability to secure a rescue from death and obtain immortality. Although the human *soul* was immortal, following death it was consigned to the dismal "house of dust" (i.e., the grave) for eternity. Another example, the myth of *Atrahasis*, tells that the gods created humans to do their labor for them and that humanity suffered plagues and famines caused by the gods until the god Enki had compassion upon humanity and provided them with fish to eat. Mesopotamians, unlike the Egyptian rulers (see below), did not widely believe in an eternal life enjoyed in the company of the gods.

Egypt: Gift of the Nile

The civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia diverged in several important ways, although they emerged in close proximity to each other and even though both shared many common civilizing characteristics. This was due in no small measure to a striking divergence in geography. Egyptian civilization was molded, almost determined, by its geography, especially by the unique qualities of its only significant river, the Nile.

The Nile River flows northward from the central African plateau and the mountains of Ethiopia over a distance of four thousand miles. It is the longest river in the world. The Nile is bordered by harsh deserts on either side along its last thousand miles, restricting human habitation to a narrow strip of riverbank averaging perhaps three to five miles in width. Beyond the Nile's banks and to the west stretches the Libyan Desert, part of the complex of deserts in and around the Sahara. The Arabian Mountains and the Red Sea lie to the east. Egypt was nearly inaccessible from Mesopotamia, except across the Sinai Peninsula or from the Mediterranean coast. Finally, unlike the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which had often-violent floods, the Nile customarily rose and fell gradually between the months of June and September, leaving behind a new layer of rich silt ready for planting. The gentle regularity of the river and the abundant fertility it provided, combined with geographical isolation, prompted the Greek historian Herodotus to name Egypt the "Gift of the Nile."

Religion and Civilization

Religion apparently played a deeper role in Egyptian civilization than it did in the other hydraulic civilizations. Whereas Mesopotamian religions often sought to appease the natural powers represented by their gods, the Egyptians viewed their monarch, the pharaoh, as a divine yet living connection between this life and a joyous eternal afterlife orbiting the sun in the company of other gods. Whereas Mesopotamian religion relegated the postmortal soul to the stygian house of dust, the Egyptian pharaoh might achieve everlasting life circling the sun. Those who served the pharaoh in this life might gain access to eternal life through serving him in the hereafter. Thus, the observer of Mesopotamian religion might conclude that "life is hard and then you die," while in Egypt life was hard, but it got much better afterward if you helped the pharaoh gain eternal life and he took you with him into the sunny eternities. A pharaoh's success in gaining eternal life depended upon successful rule in mortality. Consequently, all activities in mortality bore, for the Egyptians, a direct connection to success in the next life. Thus, religion, as the conduit from mortality to immortality and eternal life, was of paramount importance and influenced all aspects of culture and daily life, as well as government and administration.

The Delta Myth Cycle

The Delta Myth, also known as the Osiris Myth, is the story of cosmic creation and of divine purpose within that creation. It is the bedrock myth from which Egyptian religion—and Egyptian civilization—is born. The origins of this myth are lost in antiquity, but the essential elements were recorded on the walls of pyramids as early as 2500 BC. Over the subsequent centuries, the story was embellished until finally recorded by Greek and Roman historians, notably the Roman historian Plutarch (AD 46–120), illustrating the myth's durability and its incorporation into Western civilization. In addition to elaborating upon themes of death, resurrection, and eternal life, the myth cycle also defines the duties and power of the pharaoh as the gateway to the company of gods. Consequently, understanding the basic elements of this myth is necessary for an understanding of Egyptian religion and civilization.

The Ennead

The Ennead was a governing council of nine gods and goddesses responsible for the creation of the universe and the maintenance of universal order. The Delta Myth Cycle begins with them. The Ennead includes, among others: *Atum* (father of the gods, creator of the universe and of humanity), *Osiris* (god of the afterlife, of resurrection, and of eternal life), *Set* (Osiris's brother, god of darkness and chaos), and *Isis* (Osiris's sister and wife, goddess of nature and of magic, and mother of Horus, son of Osiris).

The Death of Osiris

Osiris, the god responsible for cosmic order, and his brother Set, the god of chaos, engaged in a series of arguments during the deliberations of the Ennead, arguments that produced both cosmological and existential consequences. In one of the more famous combative vignettes, Set built an elaborate and beautiful sarcophagus and promised to give it to the god or goddess it perfectly fit. One by one the members of the Ennead got in, but the coffin did not fit

any of them perfectly. Finally, Osiris tried it out for size and was an identical match. Set slammed down the coffin lid and suffocated Osiris. Set thereafter dismembered his brother's body and scattered the parts across the Nile Delta, ending Osiris's kingship and allowing chaos (Set) to occupy his throne. Unless Set were dethroned, chaos would triumph, and universal order—including resurrection and eternal life—would be destroyed.

Isis, Horus, and the Resurrection of Osiris

Isis, pregnant with Horus, searched the Nile Delta for the parts of Osiris's body. Gathering the parts together at Heliopolis—Greek for "City of the Sun"—she mummified her husband's remains. Using magic, she worked a spell of revivification, and Osiris was resurrected. He became the god of the underworld, the source of resurrection, and the very gateway to eternal life for those who emulated him.

The Contendings of Horus and Set

Horus thereafter appeared before the Ennead at Heliopolis and there demanded his father's throne. The council of gods was divided, with some favoring the older and experienced Set over the comparatively young and untried Horus. In a series of challenges, Horus repeatedly outwitted and overpowered Set. In one of the better-known contests, Set adopted the form of a giant hippopotamus dwelling in the Nile River. Thrashing about, Set-as-hippo caused widespread destructive floods, turning the normally calm Nile into a dangerous torrent. Horus, using a copper spear he obtained from his mother Isis, defeated Set and restored order to the Nile. At the conclusion of the contest, Horus rightfully ascended his father's throne, assuming responsibility for cosmic and earthly order.

Application to Egyptian Civilization

A triumphant trinity of powerful gods coalesced from out of the conflicts (first between Set and Osiris on the one hand, then between Set and Horus): Osiris, Isis, and Horus. Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, had a strong connection with the living pharaoh. The pharaoh, ruler of Egypt, was the earthly manifestation of the divine Horus. The cosmic struggle between Horus and Set never ended, but was repeated again and again by each pharaoh, acting in the place of Horus. The pharaoh, like Horus, ensured that the Nile flooded predictably and beneficially, providing sufficient water for life but not flooding. The pharaoh, like Horus, also fought against the forces of chaos (personified in Set). The forces of chaos included external threats, such as invasion, as well as internal threats to the stability of the state. Additionally, the pharaoh, as high priest, supervised the rituals and festivals needed to secure resurrection and access to eternal life on behalf of Egypt. The pharaoh's duties in this regard included battling Apophis, the giant serpent of the underworld and the deification of darkness itself, so that the sun would rise every day and life would continue.

The Pharaoh as Divine Guarantor of Egyptian Civilization

Egyptian civilization, unsurprisingly, revolved around the uninterrupted continuation of the pharaoh's power above all else, giving the institution of pharaonic monarchy immense power and incredible longevity. Theologian John Hick noted that:

> For the ancient Egyptian people life existed in a tension between finite ordered existence and a limitless surrounding chaotic nonexistence which manifested itself in darkness, in the unbounded desert, in the annual flooding of the Nile, in states of sleep, and in death.… They believed in a sacred order which was [operative] in all stages of life … [and that] the Pharaoh [performed] a cosmic role. The life of his people and the life of nature throughout his territory was thought to be closely bound up with his life, his vigor, his virility.… The king was deity incarnate, the guarantor of life and fertility, the upholder of the whole natural order (25).

Consequently all political, social, economic, cultural, and artistic issues and endeavors were structured by religion, based upon the divine power of the pharaoh acting as Horus and enforced through a well-structured priesthood. This power was passed along from pharaoh to pharaoh, with institutional consistency provided through a well-trained and stable priesthood and bureaucracy. The office of pharaoh lasted in one form or another from about 3100 to 30 BC, a testimony to its durability and power.

Periods of Egyptian History

Historians periodize ancient Egyptian history by dynasties—that is, by families that controlled the office of pharaoh. Some 168 pharaohs ruled unified Egypt throughout thirty-four dynastic periods covering more than three thousand years. The history of ancient Egypt is further divided into three "kingdoms," with an intermediate period—a period of pharaonic instability—between each kingdom: the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom.

Old Kingdom (3100–2181 BC)

The last 750 or so miles of the Nile River are divided into two major regions: Upper Egypt (in the south) and Lower Egypt (in the north). The Old Kingdom begins with the unification of these two regions under a single pharaoh. The subsequent history of ancient Egypt is the story of the continuation of unification (i.e., order) or disruption (i.e., chaos). Additionally, this was an era of massive monument construction, primarily of mortuary temples in which mummification was performed over a seventy-day period following the death of the pharaoh, and of tombs in the form of colossal pyramids. Important rulers of the Old Kingdom, also known as the Age of Pyramids, included the following pharaohs:

Narmer (c. 3100)

Narmer is considered the first pharaoh and is credited with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt sometime around 3100 BC, inaugurating what is known as the Early Dynastic period (which lasted until 2686 BC). In 1898, archaeologists discovered a remarkable artifact known as the Narmer Palette, labeled the world's first historical document by one Egyptologist.

The palette contains an early version of hieroglyphic writing (the Egyptian pictorial counterpart to Mesopotamian cuneiform), depicting Narmer executing captured enemy soldiers under the supervision of Horus (in the shape of a falcon) on one side, and imposing order upon humans and upon nature on the obverse side of the palette. Narmer established a capital in Lower Egypt at Memphis, southwest of modern Cairo. Whether the palette memorializes actual events or is legendary is debated, but one thing remains clear: Narmer was the first person who maintained order over chaos as king of a united Egypt.

Djoser (2667–2648)

Djoser ruled during the Third Dynasty, marking the end of what is known as the Early Dynastic phase of the Old Kingdom. Located about fifteen miles southwest from modern Cairo, the first pyramid constructed was designed and built as his tomb by the great priest/architect Imhotep (c. 2560–2600). Known as a "step" pyramid, it took the basic one-level tomb (called a *mastaba*) and raised it to six levels. Later, Fourth-Dynasty pharaohs such as Senefru, Khufu, Khafre, and Menukare, filled in the steps of the pyramid, making the sides smooth. Eventually, pyramid building moved a dozen or so miles northward to the Giza Plateau. The Great Pyramid at Giza, completed in the twenty-sixth century BC as the tomb of the pharaoh Khufu, was the tallest building in the world for nearly 3,800 years prior to the completion of the Washington Monument in 1886, which ironically is patterned after the Egyptian obelisk. The nearby Great Sphinx is thought to bear either the visage of Khafre or his son Menukare.

Middle Kingdom (2055–1650 BC)

The unification of Egypt during the Old Kingdom ended in what historians call the First Intermediate Period (2181–2055 BC), during which one king ruled Upper Egypt from the city Thebes, while another ruled Lower Egypt from a city known in Greek as Heracleopolis. The Middle Kingdom began following another unification under the Eleventh Dynasty in 2055. The Middle Kingdom is known less for its art and architecture than for its military expansion southward into a region called Nubia under the warrior-pharaoh Senusret III (r. 1878–1839). An Asiatic people called the Hyksos invaded the Nile Delta in the seventeenth century. While the origin and identity of the Hyksos is a matter of debate, the ancient historian Josephus (AD 37–100) concluded that the Hyksos were none other than the children of the Israelite patriarch Jacob (1652–1505?), who together with Joseph and Joseph's brothers fled to Egypt during a famine. The migration (or possible military invasion) of the Hyksos resulted in disunity, marking the end of the Middle Kingdom, and inaugurating the Second Intermediary Period (1650–1550).

New Kingdom (1550–1069 BC)

This period marked the height of pharaonic Egypt both culturally and territorially. Egypt, for the first time, expanded eastward into the regions of Palestine and Syria, bringing the pharaonic state into contact and conflict with the kingdoms of Mesopotamia already discussed, notably the Hittites, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans. The period witnessed the construction of spectacular temples on the eastern bank of the Nile—such as the temples of Karnak and Thebes—as well as great mortuary temples and tombs in the area now known as the Valley of the Kings. Important pharaohs of the New Kingdom included the following rulers:

Hatshepsut (r. 1479–1458)

The name Hatshepsut may be translated as "foremost of noble ladies." Although she was not the first woman to rule as pharaoh, she ruled longer than any other woman, about twenty-two years. She reestablished trade, which had been interrupted by the Hyksos during the Second Intermediary Period. Her trade mission to the Land of Punt—located at the southern end of the Red Sea—established a prosperous trade in myrrh, not only stabilizing the treasury but providing a surplus. Hatshepsut was one of the most prolific builders in ancient Egypt and was highly effective at self-promotion, a trait of virtually all pharaohs. Her massive and famed mortuary temple located west of Luxor, known as *Djeser-Djeseru* (Holy of Holies) established the classical style for New Kingdom temples. Following the death of Thutmose II, Hatshepsut asserted her right to be pharaoh based upon an oracular vision.

Thutmose III (1479–1425)

The stepson of Hatshepsut, Thutmose served as her commander in chief, sharing the responsibilities of rule. Their names appear side by side on numerous royal monuments, with neither given priority over the other. Often nicknamed the "Napoleon of Egypt," Thutmose III expanded Egypt's border past the Euphrates River and into Mesopotamia following a great victory over Canaanite and Syrian forces at the Battle of Megiddo, now located in modern Israel. In the mid-fifteenth century, he likewise penetrated southward along the Nile into Nubia, located in northern Sudan. Not to be outdone in monument building by his stepmother, Hatshepsut, he contributed significantly to the construction and renovation of one of the world's largest religious sites, the temple complex at Karnak, located east of the Nile near Luxor. His mummy, one of the most famous in the world, now resides in the Royal Mummies Hall of the National Museum of Cairo.

Akhenaten (d. 1336)

Known as Amenhotep IV for the first five years of his reign, this pharaoh thereafter changed his name to Akhenaten. The change signified not only a personal abandonment of the god Amun and the powerful priesthood built around him in favor of the sun god Aten, but signified the top-down transformation of all religion during the remainder of his reign. Akhenaten became the sun itself, the dispenser of its light, and the direct source of life, a new twist to Egyptian religion often described as an abandonment of polytheism replaced by monotheism. The move, whether or not politically motivated, certainly had political overtones, principally through the disenfranchisement of the priests of Amun, whose power and influence were represented by the size and magnificence of the Amun-Re precincts in the Temple of Karnak. The sizable donations gifted to the priests of Amun now flowed directly to the pharaoh, indicating an expansion of royal power at the expense of the priests of Amun. Akhenaten moved his capital to Amarna, located along the Nile well north of Luxor, which also helped concentrate power into his hands. Aside from political and religious reforms, the pharaoh inaugurated a new

artistic style, more realistic in its representations. Among the most famous pieces to come from his reign is a bust of his wife, Nefertiti, whose full name means, "The Beauty of Aten, the Beautiful One Has Arrived."

Tutankhamun (r. 1332–1323)

Tutankhamun ascended the throne following the death of Akhenaten. He soon began reversing many of Akhenaten's changes, reestablishing the primacy of the Cult of Amun and abandoning the new capital at Amarna. Tutankhamun, known popularly as King Tut, is also famous for the quantity and quality of his burial treasury discovered by English archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922. Carter's discovery led to the myth of the curse of the mummy, depicted frequently in popular culture.

Ramesses II (r. 1279–1213)

Considered by some to be pharaoh during the time of the biblical prophet Moses, Ramesses II lived into his nineties and ruled Egypt for more than sixty-six years. Known as Ramesses the Great, his achievements mark him as perhaps the most powerful ruler in ancient Egypt, if not in history. Building a new capital at Pi-Ramesses in the Nile Delta, he prepared to invade Syria and meet the Hittite threat at the Battle of Qadesh (mentioned above). The pharaoh extended and consolidated territory westward into Libya and southward into Nubia. Ramesses II inaugurated a period of monument building unknown since the time of the Great Pyramids during the Old Kingdom. Examples include the following structures:

Abu Simbel. Abu Simbel is a temple complex dedicated to the Egyptian "victory" at Qadesh. Begun in 1264 BC, the complex took twenty years to complete, and was but one of six temples built in Nubia under his rule. The Great Temple was carved into a sandstone hillside. Its façade measures thirty-five meters wide (114.8 feet), and it displays four colossal statues of Ramesses II enthroned, each about twenty meters in height (65.6 feet). In 1964 the Aswan High Dam project created Lake Nasser, forcing the relocation of the entire temple complex to avoid inundation. The temple was cut into blocks weighing up to thirty tons and was moved sixty-five feet in elevation and two hundred feet back from the banks of the new lake at a cost of $40 million (measured in 1964 dollars). Ramesses also built a second temple at Abu Simbel for one of his wives, Queen Nefertari.

The Colossus of Ramesses II. Discovered at Memphis, the colossus stands at eleven meters (thirty-six feet) tall and weighs ninety-one tons (182,000 lbs.). Discovered in 1820, the statue was moved to Cairo by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1955. Concerns about deterioration caused by urban pollution led to its temporary relocation near Giza. The statue will be placed in the new Grand Egyptian Museum (scheduled to open in 2015).

Ramesses III (1187–1156)

Ramesses III is considered to be the last New Kingdom pharaoh to wield substantial power over united Egypt. In about 1179 BC, he successfully defended the empire from a series of invasions by several groups of people collectively known as the "Sea Peoples," whose origins

are uncertain and whose identity is disputed. The murals at the temple of Madinat Habu, near the Valley of the Kings, attest to the fierce battles and the desperation with which the Egyptians fought. Ramesses claimed that he settled the survivors in Southern Palestine. The Philistines of the Old Testament descended from at least one group of the Sea People. The invasions/migrations of the Sea Peoples proved a heavy drain on the treasury and other resources, possibly encouraging a relatively widespread and successful plot against the pharaoh's life. The mummies used in Hollywood movies derive their physical appearance from the mummified remains of Ramesses III.

Egypt and Western Civilization

Egypt came under foreign domination over the course of the next few centuries, culminating in Persian dominance from about 525 BC until 332 BC (when Egypt was taken by Alexander the Great). Egypt was ruled from 332 until 30 BC by a Greek dynasty called the Ptolemies. They ruled Egypt until it became part of the Roman Empire (see chapter 3). The Persians, the Ptolemaic Greeks, and the Romans emulated the pharaohs, from performing elaborate rituals of adoption by the Egyptian gods (principally Horus) to the construction of their own "Egyptian" temples—such as Edfu, Kom Ombo, and Phillae—along the Nile. Aside from contributions in art and architecture, which are unique, monumental, and inspiring, concepts drawn from Egyptian religion exercised a profound impact upon Western civilization, particularly with reference to the concepts of resurrection and eternal life. Subsequent "mystery cults" based upon aspects of the Egyptian religion, such as the Cult of Isis, expanded across the Hellenistic World and the Roman Empire, drawing converts from every level of the population, and some argue, paving the way for the acceptance of Christianity in the Roman world.

Achaemenid Persia: The Empire

The Persians (specifically the emperors of the Achaemenid dynasty, which ruled from 550–330 BC) are often credited with the establishment of the first empire in Western civilization. Taking the increased size of successive Mesopotamian kingdoms and the size and stability of pharaonic Egypt into account, perhaps *they* should instead be considered the first empires. Although there are many reasons for supporting a Persian claim on the one hand, or a Mesopotamian/Egyptian claim on the other, this narrative focuses upon the fact that Persia was first to break free from the geographical limitations of isolated river basins and related hydrology and form an empire comparatively unbound by such geographic constraints. The states of Egypt and Mesopotamia, large as they eventually became, were still bound to the regional river basins that gave them birth. For the first time in Western history, the Persians established an expansive state covering parts of three continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe) and were not bound to any single river system. But the Persians now had to meet the new challenge of extended overland communications. Just as the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia had learned to use rivers as highways for trade and transportation, the Persians mastered road building and overland communications for the first time.

Cyrus the Great

Taking advantage of weaknesses in the Chaldean Empire, warriors under the command of Cyrus the Great (r. 559–530) entered Mesopotamia from Iran in the last half of the sixth century. They were named for their home province, Pars, and were known as Persians, although the state Cyrus the Great founded is also known as the Achaemenid Empire. Consequently, the term "Persian" has geographical origins and refers generally to a series of dynasties that ruled the region, whereas the name "Achaemenid" refers to a single dynasty to which Cyrus the Great belonged. Babylon fell into Cyrus's hands in 539, but once again, Mesopotamia proved easier to conquer than to defend. Cyrus, instead of ruling from within Mesopotamia itself, established a state based in Persia. Rather than move his capital and government to Babylon, he maintained his capital in Pasargadae, located to the east on the far side of the protective Zagros Mountains. Rather than disable, sack, or destroy Babylon, he entered the city peacefully and preserved its wealth and population for his own purposes. True, his armies fought vigorously, but clemency, even mercy as it was understood in the context of ancient conquests, was the rule. Numerous textual and archaeological sources attest to this. For example, the Chronicle of Nabonidus, King of Babylon treats Cyrus as chosen to rule by a supreme god, a view supported by the Cyrus Cylinder, discovered in 1879. Having allowed the Jews of Babylon to return to Jerusalem and reconstruct the temple, he was hailed as Jehovah's shepherd by the biblical prophet Isaiah:

> This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me (Isaiah 45:1–4 NIV).

Finally, Cyrus ruled through, rather than deposed, local or regional kings, and bore the Persian title *Shah-n-shah*, or King of Kings.

By the time of Cyrus's death, the Persian Empire stretched from modern Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east to Palestine and the borders of Asia Minor in the west. Darius I (r. 541–486), the third Persian emperor, conquered Egypt, Asia Minor, and the European province of Thrace (now in modern Greece). Darius later suffered defeat at the Battle of Marathon (490). The next emperor, Xerxes I (r. 486–465), sent another army to Greece and gained a tactical victory at the Battle of Thermopylae (480). Xerxes subsequently suffered a decisive defeat at sea in the Battle of Salamis that same year, forcing the Persians to retreat. (The Persian-Greek wars are covered in more detail in chapter 2.) By the end of Xerxes's reign, the Persian Empire stretched from Libya to Central Asia, beyond the geographical limits of river basins that defined earlier kingdoms and civilizations, thus creating the largest empire up to that point in Western history.

Persian Government

The vastness of their empire forced the Persians to invent or extend existing technologies, both physical and governmental. The empire was divided into hundreds of smaller administrative units, each called a "satrapy," under the administration of a governor, called a "satrap." Although often under the control of local royalty or aristocracy, inspectors and auditors visited each

satrapy, allowing for a more effective central control of distant provinces. Unable to rely upon rivers as natural "highways," the Persians built the overland Royal Road, covering a distance of over 1,500 miles from the capital at Susa in Iran to the city of Sardis near the Mediterranean coast. A message and mails system, often compared with the American Pony Express system, allowed for fast communication from one end of the empire to the other in little more than a week—overland speeds that would have been unimaginable in the ancient world.

Zoroastrianism

Persian accomplishments did not begin or end with government and administration, but included religion as well. Sometime between 1500 and 1200 BC, an Iranian prophet named Zoroaster (also known as Zarathustra) founded what became one of the world's most influential religions: Zoroastrianism. He started teaching, according to tradition, following a vision he experienced at the age of thirty. Zoroaster taught that one supreme and transcendent God, named Ahura Mazda, created the universe. Ahura Mazda—also called the Uncreated Creator—represents order, truth, justice, light, and goodness. But his is not the only transcendent force in the universe; Angra Mainyu (also called Ahriman) is the divine polar opposite, representing chaos, error, corruption, darkness, and evil. The universe, according to Zoroastrianism, is engaged in a constant and ongoing battle between these forces. So far this sounds similar to the Egyptian religion, but there are critical differences. Whereas the divine pharaoh, Horus on earth, maintains cosmic order through his person, every human participates in the battle between order and chaos according to Zoroastrianism. Individual human choice reinforces and strengthens either order or chaos, either good or evil. And individuals, not a divine king, decide which side will ultimately emerge victorious. Zoroastrianism moved beyond maintenance of a divine king as a solution to chaos and evil and opened an ethical dimension in Western religion wherein moral agency determines universal destiny, creating individual responsibility for the preservation and triumph of truth and justice.

Zoroastrianism maintains an eschatological conceptualization of time, meaning that the past and present are in conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil, and that this conflict has an unavoidable future terminus, an end point, inevitably resulting in the triumph of Ahura Mazda and the forces of right, in a fundamental restructuring of the universe around the good and in the final judgment of every human. In the Zoroastrian end-time, a leader named Saoshyant—a man born of a virgin impregnated by Ahura Mazda while swimming in a lake—will emerge. In the final battle against evil, Saoshyant—wielding a swordlike weapon—will cause the very metals hidden in the mountains to melt into a river across which the righteous will pass unharmed but in which the wicked will be consumed, thus purifying the earth from its inhabitants. The universe will be restored to its perfect state, as it was when created by Ahura Mazda. The souls of all persons must subsequently cross the Bridge of Judgment, where the righteous will be guided safely across by an angelic maiden and from which the wicked will be cast down to hell by an ugly crone.

The introduction of the theological concept of *dualism* (a conflict of opposites), individual moral agency, eschatology, judgment, and the cosmic triumph of good over evil were concepts disclosed first in Zoroastrian scripture. These concepts have exercised a profound influence upon Western thought—from debates between diverse political ideologies to the formulation of human rights—that continues today. Historians trace the influence of Zoroastrian ideas through Jewish scripture and Christian messianic thought, as well as through its

incorporation into Greek religion and philosophy, making it perhaps Persia's most enduring contribution to Western civilization.

Conclusion

Humanity began its voyage toward civilization in the Stone Age, which culminated in the technological advancements and societal transformations known as the Neolithic Revolutions. Increased adoption of agricultural techniques produced a more stable and increased food supply and encouraged peoples to live in ever-larger permanent settlements based upon increasingly specialized labor. During the Age of Metals (bronze first, then iron), four important hydraulic civilizations emerged in river basins along the Yellow River (modern China), the Indus River (modern Pakistan), and the Nile River (Egypt), and in Mesopotamia along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (modern Iraq). City-states in Mesopotamia were eventually brought under regional governments, or kingdoms, beginning with Sargon the Great in the late third millennium BC. A series of kingdoms were established in Mesopotamia by Akkadians, Babylonians, Hittites, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and other peoples, culminating in the creation of the West's first empire under the Persian ruler Cyrus the Great. Egypt, which together with Mesopotamia formed one of the two founding civilizations in the West, developed into a theocracy under the divine leadership of a pharaoh, along the Nile River. A third civilization, the Hellenic civilization of the Greeks, will be added to this list in the next chapter, and the resulting fusion of all three, called the "Hellenistic World," will provide a rich seedbed for the cultivation of Western civilization in ancient times.

CHAPTER 2

Ancient and Classical Greece

> The admiration of the present and succeeding ages will be ours, since we have not left our power without witness, but have shown it by mighty proofs … we have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere, whether for evil or for good, have left imperishable monuments behind us.
>
> —Pericles, *Funeral Oration*

Introduction

It is safe to say that the peoples we call the Greeks made the most enduring cultural contributions to Western civilization. In virtually every field of endeavor or learning, they built upon the culture inherited from earlier civilizations and explored new territory. Their contribution to the intellectual and aesthetic aspects of Western civilization is especially profound. In fact, it would not be absolute hyperbole to proclaim that all the essential components of Western civilization rest on a solid Greek foundation. The one exception would be Western religion, which is an outgrowth of the Hebrew tradition.

Because the story of Greek civilization is both complex and central to the story of Western civilization, this chapter takes a few more pages than the others to make its points. Having investigated the Greeks thoroughly, the reader will be better prepared to understand and appreciate the Romans and later participants in the Western tradition.

Mediterranean Cultures of the Bronze Age

The Persians were the first Near Eastern civilization to exercise sustained and direct political control over European territory—having acquired a small part of the eastern Balkan Peninsula known as Thrace in the sixth century BC. This fact might indicate that Europe's first civilizations were tied directly to the Near East. But Europe's earliest civilizations were, instead, born in and around the Eastern Mediterranean seacoast during the Bronze Age. From 2500 to about 1000 BCE, a series of commercial and military cultures emerged in the area of the Aegean Sea. Three significant examples merit special mention. A people called the Minoans (2500 to 1400 BCE) appeared first, extending their sea-based trade network (based in their capital Knossos on the island of Crete) from Egypt to the Iberian Peninsula (modern Spain), and becoming perhaps the world's first seaborne people. Second, the Mycenaean Greeks (1900 to 1200 BCE) adopted and adapted Minoan culture, writing, architecture, and art, although Greek military exploits (such as the Trojan War, discussed below) contrasted with the so-called "Minoan Peace" described by some historians. A third culture, the Phoenicians (1500 to 300 BCE), extended Mesopotamian and Canaanite trade into the Mediterranean basin from the ports of Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos, located along the Levantine Coast.

Each of these cultures contributed materially to what would become a comparatively homogenous and shared Mediterranean culture. Based in port cities and political centers called "palace complexes," they mastered oceangoing capabilities, moving beyond the restrictions of rivers and roads, developed common trade practices, extended the mastery of metal-based

technologies and mining, refined and simplified primitive writing systems into what eventually became civilization's first alphabets, shared legends and myths essential to the formation of a regional identity, colonized entire regions, maintained written records using various writing systems (with the phonetic system eventually becoming dominant), and incorporated numerous gods and goddesses into an expanding, flexible, pantheistic religious setting. By borrowing, redefining, and adapting core elements of Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilization, these Bronze Age cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean laid the foundation for the Greek and Roman civilizations that followed.

Early Greek Civilization

Greek civilization is customarily divided into five principal periods:

- Mycenaean Era (1900 to 1200 BCE)
- Greek Dark Age (1200 to 800 BCE)
- Archaic Period (800 to 500 BCE)
- Classical Period (500 to 334 BCE)
- Hellenistic Era (334 to 30 BCE)

The basic outline of Mycenaean civilization, which lasted until the twelfth century BCE, was presented above. The remaining periods of Greek history are described below.

The Greek Dark Age

Historians describe the period after the fall of Mycenaean culture until the eighth century as the Greek Dark Age. Available evidence indicates that Greek population declined, settlements were abandoned, literacy and writing disappeared, and poverty increased during this time. Historians attribute the decline to several possible events or combinations of events. The Trojan War—likely a Mycenean-age competition between Greeks and Hittites over control of the Dardanelles Strait between the Aegean and Black Seas—exemplifies growing trade disagreements among the cultures competing for control of the region, which depleted their human and material resources in wasteful, interminable military conflicts. The migration of another Greek-speaking people, called Dorians, into the peninsula, and the displacement of the existing Greek inhabitants, offers another possible explanation for the collapse of Bronze Age Mycenaean culture. Additionally, the climate may have changed dramatically enough to produce famine. The aforementioned "Sea Peoples," eastern Mediterranean pirates identified in Egyptian sources from this period, may have been both a byproduct of such natural disasters and one of the causes of the descent into chaos. Although the exact causes of decline are not clear to us, the effects are clearly visible in the preserved archaeological record. At about 1200 BC, charcoal layers appear in the stratified ruins of numerous palace complexes, indicating widespread destruction.

Politically, Greece changed in significant ways during the Dark Age. Whereas Myceanean palace complexes, each headed by a figure called the *wanax*, had ruled over entire regions of the Peloponnesus, Attica, and other areas of Greece, political power during the Dark Age coalesced around local strongmen who tended to take the title *basileus* and who provided protection for the other inhabitants of individual settlements. The *basileus*, usually aided by a

core group of military companions, leveraged his protective capacities to procure the lion's share of the land and political power of a settlement, such that he came over time to act as a ruler or king and his companions as aristocratic nobles. Although this *basileus*-centered political system became the norm in Greece by the end of the Dark Age, the memory of the earlier *wanax*/palace complex system persisted in the Greek cultural memory, and some of the heroes of the Greek literary and mythological tradition, including key characters in the Trojan War saga, seem to be based on the *wanakes* of the Mycenean era.

In addition to destruction, depopulation, and the decentralization of political power, this period is called the Greek Dark Age for another reason: the Mycenaeans, who had employed a script called Linear B, stopped writing. This development is not surprising, given the focus on survival in the midst of the chaos and dislocation. The Greeks may be the only culture to have lost completely the ability to write and then to have regained it. The new style of writing that appeared in the eighth century BCE was an adaptation of the alphabet of the Phoenicians, with whom the Greeks participated in regional trade. Toward the end of the Dark Age, the population stabilized, grew, and expanded outward, engaging anew in sea-based trade and coming into contact with the Phoenicians, the new commercial masters of the Mediterranean.

Writing systems such as cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphics underwent a sustained simplification process during the first millennium BCE, resulting in the Phoenician alphabet, which, with some modification from culture to culture, became the basis of all subsequent writing in Western civilization. Instead of thousands of separate wedge-shaped markings or complex pictographic drawings, a few dozen symbols, each representing a single sound, made writing easier and increasingly uniform, no matter the language being written, no matter the time in which it was written, and no matter the geographical context of its writing. Sustained trade with the Phoenicians required written documentation in the form of contracts and warehouse receipts. Trade exposed the Greeks to the Phoenician alphabet, which they modified (the Greek alphabet was the first to include vowel symbols) to fit their spoken language. It was not long before writing moved beyond such practical matters and was used to create an increasingly common Greek identity through poetry and prose, including the works of Homer and Hesiod.

The Archaic Period

Homer and Hesiod lived during a transitional era in Greek history called the Archaic Period (roughly 800 to 500 BCE), a period of cultural awakening, frequent warfare, and rapid political and social development. Their writings simultaneously preserved the heritage of Minoan and Mycenaean culture and deeply shaped Greek self-identity into the future. In a very broad sense, these works provide the stories and legends used by Greeks—indeed by virtually all participants in Western civilization—to answer the unspoken question, "What does a good Greek _____ do?"

Homer

Two seminal epic poems are attributed to Homer, a Greek poet who is thought to have lived in the eighth century BC. These two poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey,* are counted among the most influential works of literature in history and, although attributed to Homer, were probably handed down orally over the centuries of the Dark Age before being written down. These poems deserve special treatment not only due to their centrality to Greek identity and their

ages-long influence upon Western civilization generally, but also for the information they provide about the society and culture of the early Archaic Age.

The Iliad

The Iliad recounts key scenes from the legendary, decade-long war between the Achaeans (Homer's name for the Mycenaean Greeks led by Agamemnon) and the Kingdom of Troy. Other Classical texts—the Athenian tragedies of the fifth century BC and the poetry of the Augustan Age of Rome, for example—would later flesh out the story of the Trojan War even further. Though the historical reality of such a conflict is uncertain, Troy's location at the entrance to the Dardanelles Strait—a key locus for the grain trade between the Aegean and Black Seas—likely meant that Greeks and Hittites competed for control of the site during the Mycenean period. In *The Iliad*, this war forms the backdrop for a poetic tale about the competing interests of gods and heroes; the characters and institutions it portrays represent an amalgamation of the historical memory of the Mycenean period (transmitted orally through the Dark Age) and contemporary realities of the Archaic Age.

The basic story of the Trojan War proceeds as follows. Paris, son of King Priam of Troy, steals away with Helen, queen and wife of King Menelaus of Sparta, and takes her back to Troy with him. Helen is a reward of sorts for Paris, given by the goddess Aphrodite, whom Paris had chosen as most beautiful goddess in a divine beauty contest (thus angering Hera and Athena, the other contestants). The Achaeans, particularly Menelaus and his brother, King Agamemnon of Mycenae, raise an army and sail for Troy to reclaim Helen, but their efforts are stymied by the city's impenetrable walls. For the next ten years, the Achaeans attempt to bring down the walls of Troy—the fabled "towers of Ilium." *The Iliad* picks up the story in the ninth year of the war. The Achaean army, as described by Homer, features a star-studded cast of larger-than-life heroes and demigods, including the warriors Achilles, Ajax, and Odysseus. Camping outside Troy's walls, they spend their time arguing among themselves, giving and taking offense, plotting and scheming, and occasionally doing battle with the Trojans. The Trojans, led by the disciplined warrior-prince and heir apparent Hector, hold fast behind the formidable walls, but the schemes of gods and men eventually turn to their ruin. In the pivotal scene of *The Iliad*, Hector is slain by Achilles during one of the rare conflicts outside the walls. Achilles then desecrates Hector's body—a grave offense against social ethics—but relinquishes the corpse after King Priam comes personally to the Greek camp to beg for its release.

The conclusion of the Trojan War is not recounted in *The Iliad*, though it is discussed in *The Odyssey* and elaborated on in other Greek and Roman texts. Virgil's *Aeneid*, the great Roman founding epic composed in the Augustan era, provides the most elaborate narrative of the Greek conquest of the city, though much of this narrative was not original to Virgil or to Roman culture more generally. As Virgil tells it, the Achaeans are about to give up and return home when Odysseus, known for his cunning, comes upon the idea of the Trojan horse, a "victory" gift to the Trojans that allows a squad of soldiers to gain entrance to the city, accomplishing overnight by subterfuge what the Achaean army could not accomplish in a decade by direct means.

The import and meaning of this epic poetry is not in the action, but in the debate and dialogue, in which core Greek values are challenged, defended, and finally exemplified or betrayed by the participants. *The Iliad* records life in Bronze Age Greece, and addresses such questions as "What does a good Greek king do?" and "What does a good Greek warrior do?"

One suspects that the clever and patient Odysseus, whose story continues in Homer's other epic, comes off as a better leader than other Achaean chieftains, including the vaunted Agamemnon, and as a better warrior than legendary Achilles with his fatal heel or Ajax, who in a fit of overweening pride, falls upon his own sword.

The Iliad is also a vital source for information about the social and cultural context of the Dark Age and early Archaic Age, including the persistent historical memory of the Mycenean Period. For instance, it highlights the political transition from the *wanax*/palace complex political system to the *basileus*/aristocracy system that dominated the early Archaic Age. Homer identifies most of the Achaean heroes as *basileis*, and the descriptions of their localized authority, particularly that of Odysseus over Ithaca, fits with what we know of the political power of the Archaic Age *basileus*. In other words, Homer places most of his characters into the social and political situations that were current when these texts were written down. However, Agamemnon, the leader of the Achaean expedition to Troy is identified by the term *wanax*, the Mycenean title for palace complex ruler. This inclusion of the earlier term suggests the persistence of Mycenean Age culture in the historical memory of the Archaic Age. Moreover, individual communities tapped into these heroic legends in their formation of their communal identities, erecting shrines to Homeric heroes and propounding local myths of origin (e.g., the Athenian story of Theseus and the Minotaur). In summary, Greek society and culture of the Archaic Age was comprised of a mixture of the very old and the relatively recent, and Homer's epics weave both together.

The Odyssey

This complex and justly famous tale of adventure revolves around the attempts of Odysseus to return to his home in Ithaca. After fighting in the Trojan War, he spends another decade making his way back, having offended the sea god Poseidon by blinding Poseidon's son Polyphemus the Cyclops. Athena, goddess of war and wisdom (the combination Odysseus displays more than any other mortal—hence Athena's favoritism), aids Odysseus and his family as much as she is able without crossing Poseidon. The action of the book alternates among four settings: (1) the divine realm of the gods, where Athena attempts to persuade Zeus, king of the gods, to intervene on Odysseus's behalf and works herself toward that end; (2) Ithaca, where Odysseus's wife Penelope is hard-pressed to fend off suitors seeking to marry her, claiming that Odysseus, *basileus* of Ithaca, is long dead; (3) the journeys of Odysseus's son Telemachus who seeks out his lost father, aided by the disguised Athena; and (4) the dangerous travels of Odysseus himself as he avoids (and sometimes gets caught in) the temptations and entrapments of gods and goddesses, dodges ferocious monsters, journeys into the underworld, and finally swallows his pride and submits to the will of the gods. Among the numerous questions explored in this seminal tale of human hardship and triumph are the following:

- What does a good Greek spouse do? Both Odysseus and Penelope are challenged in this regard—she through the relentless petitions of suitors, and he through a series of encounters with goddesses, including the dangerous Circe and the beautiful Calypso. Though he is offered and enjoys temporarily a taste of the divine experience (including the offer of immortality) through his association with these beings, he ultimately rejects their company and promises in favor of his mortal wife. Arriving in Ithaca, Odysseus doubts his wife's virtue given his twenty-year absence and his own ambivalent fidelity.

Penelope has been true, however, and they rediscover their love in the bed he once built for them out of a living tree:

> He wept as he held the wife he loved, the soul of loyalty, in his arms at last. Joy, warm as the joy that shipwrecked sailors feel…buoyed up with joy as they plant their feet on solid ground again, spared a deadly fate. So, joyous now to her the sight of her husband, vivid in her gaze, that her white arms, embracing his neck would never for a moment let him go (463).

- What does a good Greek son or a good Greek father do? Telemachus, though an unbearded youth, searches for his father with the encouragement and aid of Athena and never gives up hope of finding him and bringing him safely home. Odysseus, arriving home in disguise, reveals himself to his son and enlists his aid in cleansing his home of suitors and reestablishing his reign through just vengeance (again with Athena's permission and assistance):

> You dogs! You never imagined I'd return from Troy, so cocksure that you bled my house to death, ravished my serving women, wooed my wife behind my back while I was still alive! No fear of the gods who rule the skies up there, no fear that men's revenge might arrive someday. Now all your necks are in the noose, your doom is sealed! (440)

- What does a good Greek believer do? Greeks took their anthropomorphic gods seriously and believed that they controlled both natural and human forces (e.g., emotions like love) that framed human existence. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus offends the gods by asserting that he accomplished the fall of Troy by wit and not through divine aid. Additionally, having blinded Polyphemus the Cyclops (who had threatened to eat his entire crew), Odysseus reveals his name and revels in his defeat of the monster. Polyphemus calls down the wrath of his father, Poseidon, upon Odysseus and his companions. Like other figures in Greek mythology (e.g., Oedipus), Odysseus is thus guilty and suffers the consequences of *hubris*, a foolish overconfidence in his own abilities and accomplishments. Greeks considered this attitude and indeed any lack of moderation to be deeply offensive to the gods and potentially destructive of human society. They emphasized instead the *Golden Mean*, the pursuit of a path between excess and deficiency. Only when the suitably-chastened Odysseus learns of and submits himself to the will of the gods is he allowed to return home. But he does this at great cost: his crew perishes, his ships are destroyed, and he wanders for ten years. When he reaches Ithaca at long last, he must initially play the role of a humble beggar instead of a triumphant king—all events that Polyphemus had asked his father, Poseidon, to bring about:

> "Hear me, Poseidon, god of the sea-blue mane who rocks the earth! If I am really your son and you claim to be my father, come, grant that Odysseus, raider of cities, Laertes' son who makes his home in Ithaca, never reaches home. Or if he is fated to see his people once again and reach his native country, let him come home late and come a broken man, all shipmates

> lost, alone in a stranger's ship, and let him find a world of pain at home." So he prayed and the god of the sea-blue mane Poseidon heard his prayer (228).

Hesiod

As with Homer, Hesiod's identity and biographical dates are uncertain, but the texts attributed to him—*Works and Days* and *Theogony*—were likely written around the same time as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Hesiod's works established in writing many defining characteristics of the Greek pantheon of gods and goddesses, memorialized fundamental tales in Greek mythology, narrated the scope and course of history from the advent of the primordial gods to his own day, exhibited aspects of Archaic Age religious ritual and custom, developed a primitive conceptualization of economics as a science of scarcity, and emphasized the importance of the individual by making the author the subject of his own poetry.

In *Works and Days*, Hesiod addresses the question "What does a good Greek do in the face of scarcity?" Given the depopulation and insecurity that had prevailed in the previous era, this was a valid, timely question. The text emphasizes the virtues of honest toil and decries injustice and corruption. It recounts key myths, such as the tale of the god Prometheus, who took pity upon humans and taught them how to make fire (the fundamental human technology upon which civilization is based) and suffered the wrath of Zeus for his actions. It also narrates the myth of the Five Ages, imparting an enduring and overarching structure to the Greek conceptualization of time and historical purpose: (1) the Golden Age, in which Chronos, elemental deity and father of the Titans, created the first generation of mankind, a nearly perfect race who lived in absolute harmony and prosperity; (2) the Silver Age, in which Zeus and the other Olympians created and destroyed a short-lived, witless race; (3) the Bronze Age, aptly named for the bronze tools used in earlier eras of Greek history, a period in which Zeus created a monstrous and violent race from ash trees, only to see them destroy each other; (4) the Heroic Age, in which demigods fought legendary battles at Troy and Thebes; and (5) the Iron Age, the age of toil and misery in which the current generation of mankind lives, a period characterized by war and injustice wherein the elemental forces of shame and nemesis rule supreme. In Hesiod's view, the history of mankind is cyclical: periods of peace and prosperity both follow and are followed by eras of chaos, violence, and suffering, all due in large part to the intervention of the gods. This cyclical view was the prevailing conception of history in the Greco-Roman world. The myth of the Five Ages of Man was so influential that, centuries later, the Christian philosopher and theologian Augustine of Hippo assigned actual years to each age.

Theogony is essentially a synthesis of then-existing Greek mythology and cosmology. The poem relates that the universe originally consisted of chaos and the formless void, from which the gods Gaia (earth), Tartarus (the dark cave under the earth), and Eros (love) appeared. Hesiod's myth of an original state of cosmic chaos is reminiscent of the *Enuma Elish*, an ancient Mesopotamian account of creation. The narrative follows three generations of deities—the primordial gods, the Titans, and the Olympians—and also refers to many of the heroes—Herakles, Jason, Aeneas, etc.—whose deeds fill the pages of other ancient works. The influence of Hesiod is apparent in early Greek art (especially vase painting), in the cosmological works of later Greek philosophers, including the pre-Socratics and Aristotle (see below), and in the works of literary figures like the fifth-century BCE Athenian tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

The Polis

In some ways, the Archaic Period resembled the Mycenaean, but in several key respects it did not, and the *polis* is perhaps the most important innovation of the later period. The geography of Greece is the key factor in the development of this fundamental Greek institution. Located in the southernmost portion of the Balkan Peninsula, Greece had no significant rivers to speak of, was covered by numerous tall mountains, and was almost completely surrounded by the sea (no place in Greece is farther than 100 kilometers from the sea). Consequently, it was difficult to travel from place to place overland (though comparatively easy to travel by boat), and cultivable land for farming was limited. The Greeks had a word for this: *stenochoria*, meaning "the lack of land." As the population grew near the end of the Dark Age, the shortage of land led to increased conflict.

Competition over scarce land and resources led smaller regional groups to form themselves into larger, more cohesive communities called *poleis* (sing. *polis*). In most places, political power came to rest in the hands of a *basileus* or military chieftain, who led his local compatriots (the most prominent of whom came to form an aristocracy) in the fight to conquer and protect the landholdings of the *polis*. But the challenges of scarcity led to still further community development. The dominant military innovation of this period was a formation called the *hoplite phalanx*, a highly disciplined, tight infantry unit armed with large shields and heavy pikes. This innovation had effects far beyond the battlefield and was indeed one of the most significant factors in the social development of this period. Given the need for as many men as possible to fight in the *hoplite phalanx* (numbers, discipline, and physical strength being the key factors in the effectiveness of the formation), the *basileis* and military aristocracy were willing to cede some of their political power in exchange for military participation. All participants in the community fighting force--the other landholders, that is--thus became citizens of the *polis*. The notion of citizenship in the Greek *polis* was thus born of military necessity. The need to be prepared to fight is also the likely origin of the Greek obsession with physical fitness and athletic competition. After all, landholders were expected not only to be available but also to be physically ready to fight in the *hoplite phalanx* (soldiers in the formation wore or carried 50-70 pounds of weapons and armor, or roughly half the body weight of the average Greek of this period), and they spent a significant portion of their time training for this duty through physical exercise. This formation would dominate warfare both in Greece and in other parts of the Mediterranean for several centuries.

Significant *poleis* included Sparta, Thebes, Corinth, Megara, and Athens. Although increasingly prominent over time, they were not, in the Archaic Period, the powerful city-states they would later become. Over the next few centuries, the *polis* might coalesce into a grand city and hinterland (e.g., Athens) or might remain essentially a collection of villages (e.g., Sparta). Structures of government and social organization varied from *polis* to *polis*, and a wide variety of government styles found place in one *polis* or another in the Archaic and Classical periods, from the dual monarchy and strong military aristocracy of Sparta to the direct democracy of Athens. The size and prominence of Athens, Corinth, and Sparta were the exception rather than the rule; most *poleis* remained small throughout the Archaic and Classical periods.

By the end of the Archaic Period (c. 500 BCE), the various Greek *poleis* often shared common architectural and design characteristics: protective walls, a forum and marketplace (the *agora*), a fortified citadel (the *acropolis*), temples (especially for a patron god or goddess, such

as the temples of Athena in Athens), theaters, and a *gymnasium*, yet each *polis* conceived of itself as culturally unique from all other *poleis*. Put another way, each *polis* had its own unique religion, mythology, and other aspects of culture, though all *poleis* also participated in the broader, shared *Hellenic* culture of greater Greece, which dominated the Aegean and spread to southern Italy, Sicily, North Africa, and the Black Sea. Pan-hellenic institutions like the Festival of Zeus at Olympia (i.e., the Olympic Games) and the temple of Apollo at Delphi with its famous oracle (consulted on important matters by Greeks from all over the Mediterranean) both reinforced this shared culture and provided space for competition between *poleis*.

During the sixth and seventh centuries, every major *polis* was at one time or another governed by a tyrant. Sparta was the lone exception among the larger *poleis*. The term *tyrant* carries a very negative meaning in the modern world, but that was not initially the case in Archaic Greece. A tyrant was typically a charismatic person, usually a member of the aristocracy who assumed exclusive leadership and sole political control at the insistence of the *demos*—that is, at the insistence of "the people." In the process, he and his supporters supplanted the monarch (i.e., *basileus*) and secured political power for the *demos*. Modern readers should be aware that Archaic society was stratified and that only certain persons—freeborn, adult males who were native to the *polis* in question—were considered part of "the people," that is, the *demos*. Popular tyrants in Corinth and in other *poleis* enacted reforms that led to constitutional systems of government, some of which involved elections, broadening popular participation and enfranchisement (although there is some question as to just how meaningful this popular participation was). Balancing aristocratic wealth and influence with popular support, several notable tyrants brought territorial stability to their *poleis*. However, after securing these reforms and consolidating their own power, tyrants in many *poleis* attempted to hand over power to their heirs and thus establish a new hereditary monarchy. This led to such a backlash within the *demos* that tyranny as a political system did not last beyond two or three generations. Still, it was a an important transitional phase in the development of Greek government.

Although the relative stability provided by the *polis* alleviated some of the land shortage, it merely postponed the inevitable. Unless checked by natural disaster or warfare, the population would eventually outgrow and outstrip its food supply. Over time, the *poleis* responded to potential overpopulation in three main ways: conquest, colonization, or constitutionalism.

Conquest during the Archaic Period

Archaic Greece had many *poleis*, most of them very small in size. Much of the conquest in this period consisted of securing the borders of the *polis* and, if possible, extending them at the expense of neighboring *poleis*. Even a few acres of additional farmland could mean the difference between merely subsisting and thriving. Some of the smaller *poleis* were conquered or otherwise subsumed in this constant warfare. For example, in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE Sparta fought and conquered the neighboring region of Messenia, appropriating its land and enslaving its population. The slaves, called *helots*, were not private property but rather belonged to the Spartan *polis* itself. It was largely as part of an effort to keep the massive numbers of *helots* from revolting that Sparta adopted its famous militaristic way of life. All Spartan men who were part of the city's elite caste (*homoioi* or "similars") were required to be part of the Spartan army, which engaged in constant training and discipline. Spartan boys began their training at age seven, when they left their mothers and took up residence in the barracks. Apart from the brief excursions necessary to father the next generation of Spartan soldiers, Spartan boys and men

spent their entire lives attached to their military unit, at least until their retirement at age sixty. The discipline and fighting prowess this system engendered not only kept the *helots* in line but also made the Spartan army the most formidable land force in ancient Greece. In fact, the Spartan reputation made others unwilling to attempt military engagement, so Sparta fought relatively few wars.

Colonization during the Archaic Period

In many cases, overpopulated *poleis* sent colonists abroad. Colonies spread from the coast of the Black Sea in the northeast to as far as North Africa in the south and southern Gaul and Iberia (i.e., modern France and Spain) in the west. Southern Italy and Sicily were colonized heavily—the region was called *Magna Graecia* or "greater Greece" by the Romans. The large number of Greek-named cities in this region attests to this colonization (e.g., Naples, originally *Neapolis*, meaning "New City" in Greek). Colonies often maintained commercial and familial ties with their city of origin—called a *metropolis*, meaning "mother city." Corinth, one of the richest *poleis* of the Archaic Period, established a number of important colonies, including the Sicilian city of Syracuse, which by the fifth century BCE rivaled even Athens in population. Colonization spread the Greek language, religion, and culture across the Mediterranean and laid the foundation for a far-flung series of trading posts and manufacturing centers (called "factories"). Among the goods traded throughout this network of Greek colonies was the elaborate black-figure and red-figure pottery, one of the main artistic media of the ancient Greek world.

Constitutional Development during the Archaic Period

As indicated by Hesiod in *Works and Days*, the Archaic Period's instability was due in part to the comparatively unchecked power of the aristocracy in a time of economic stress. In fact, the emergence of tyranny resulted from popular dissatisfaction with the aristocracy. Factors like the rise of tyranny and the widespread use of the hoplite phalanx prompted constitutional development, meaning the establishment of constituency-driven government, an arrangement between the aristocracy and the *demos* that allowed for some enhanced level of popular participation in governing the *polis*. Athens offers perhaps the best example of late Archaic Period constitutional development. Although democratic government eventually became the hallmark of Athenian government, it was not always that way. Around 650 BCE, a group of aristocrats (known as the "Well-Fathered Men") living in Attica (the peninsula that surrounds Athens was incorporated entirely into the Athenian *polis*) attempted to maintain control over the *polis* and yet avoid tyranny. The Well-Fathered Men formed a council of elders called the *Areopagus* that dominated politics and the courts of justice. A series of Athenian governors expanded the membership of the *demos* and the participation of the *demos* in governmental affairs during the Archaic Period, mitigating aristocratic power. Their reforms are widely regarded as laying the foundations for democratic rule in ancient Athens and inspiring democratic theory and practice in the Western world. Among these influential Athenian political innovators was Draco, known as the "Legislator," who governed Athens around the 620s BCE. Draco's most significant contribution to constitutional development was the composition and dissemination of written laws. Oral law is notoriously subject to bad memory, manipulation, or even outright fraud. Draco's written and publicly displayed laws acted as a check upon the oral

law enforced in courts operated by judges taken from the aristocracy. After Draco, Solon (c.638-558 BCE) expanded membership in the *demos* to include members of the lower classes of Athens. He also strengthened the powers of the *ekklesia*, an institution comprised of members of the *demos*, and gave it power to impeach aristocratic archons (magistrates) charged with corruption or failure to perform their sworn duty as Athens's rulers. The *ekklesia* subsequently became the sole law-making body with the advent of democracy.

The reforms of Draco and Solon, although significant, did not prevent tyranny. Pisistratus, popular with the lowest of Athenian social classes, governed as tyrant off and on from about 567 to 528 BCE. He rarely hesitated to confront the aristocracy and its power, occasionally confiscating the lands of aristocrats and distributing them among the poorer sectors of society. Pisistratus established the Panathenaic Games (which were held in Athens every four years), produced a definitive version of Homer's epic poems, and sponsored numerous works of art, temples, and monumental public architecture.

Following the tyranny of Pisistratus, Cleisthenes (ruled 500s BCE; often called the "Father of Athenian Democracy") reorganized the *polis* into electoral precincts, each called a *deme*. The *demes* were further organized into ten "tribes," with each tribe sending members chosen by lot each year to serve on a ruling council of five hundred, called the *boule*. This body was responsible for the daily operation of the government, though its role was mostly bureaucratic, not legislative. According to Aristotle, the *demes* and tribes cut across traditional aristocratic lines of control and thus subordinated elite power to the *demos*. In addition to a constituent-based political reorganization of the *polis* and the creation of the *boule*, Cleisthenes is credited with implementing ostracism, probably as a way of curbing the tendency toward tyranny. Under the provisions of ostracism, the vote of six thousand qualified citizens could exile a fellow citizen for ten years. The ostracized citizen did not forfeit his property, but he was not allowed to live in Attica until the ten years had expired. Requiring the vote of six thousand citizens reduced the probability of the abusive enforcement of private quarrels and made ostracism the means for defusing major confrontations. Basically, one or more of the leaders of a community-wide controversy could be given a ten-year time-out by popular demand for the good of the community.

The Classical Period

Historians label the period between c. 500 BCE and 334 BCE the Classical Age or the *Hellenic* period. During this time, the Greek *poleis* reached new heights politically and culturally and became more involved in the politics of the greater Eastern Mediterranean. As described in chapter 1, the Persian Empire conquered Egypt under Emperor Darius I (r. 541–486) and captured its first territories in Thrace shortly thereafter. By the year 500 BCE, Persia controlled most of the coastline of the Eastern Mediterranean, from Egypt in the south, around Palestine and the Levant northward, and northwestward across Asia Minor and Thrace. Only the areas of the Greek world controlled by the *poleis* stood in the way of complete Persian control of the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. One of the most difficult regions for Persia to rule was the western coast of Asia Minor—the Greek-speaking region called Ionia—and it was here that a major rebellion against Persian rule broke out in the first decade of the fifth century BCE. Supported as it was by Athens and other *poleis*, this rebellion gave the Persians a justifiable excuse to attempt conquest of the rest of the Aegean. The Greeks responded to the Persian

invasion by marshaling their collective resources to defend the Greek world from a people they considered "barbarians" (a Greek word connoting non-Greek speakers).

The Persian Wars

Defeating the Greeks appeared a simple task, given the power and unity of the Persian Empire and the relative disunity of the numerous *poleis*. Nevertheless, the Greeks had several advantages, though these are perhaps not as readily apparent as the casual observer might think. Greece is mountainous, with few open plains where armies may deploy and engage in widespread combat; the Persians were unaccustomed to the terrain, were unfamiliar with Greek military tactics (principally infantry in the form of the *hoplite phalanx*), and were conditioned to fight the chariot-based armies of Egypt and Mesopotamia. In addition, the Greeks fought near their homes, while the Persians had to maintain a large army comprised mostly of mercenaries in the field from a distance of several hundred miles. These relative advantages and disadvantages made the Persian Wars more of a battle between equals than of a dozen proverbial Greek Davids against the massive Persian Goliath.

The term "First Persian War" refers to the first Persian invasion of the Greek mainland (i.e., the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula), and is also known as the First Greco-Persian War. As mentioned, between 499 and 493 BC, a series of rebellions against Persian rule occurred in Greek-speaking Ionia with support from Athens and a few other *poleis*. The rebellion ended with the capture of the *polis* of Miletus by the Persians. But this was just the beginning of a much larger conflict. Although the Persians were interested in resuming a peaceful and undisturbed rule in Ionia, they also decided to punish Athens and the other *poleis* for supporting the revolt. Having resubjugated Thrace in 492—which also broke from Persian rule during the revolts—a Persian amphibious assault force under orders from Emperor Darius I landed on Attica at the Bay of Marathon in 490, resulting in the famous Battle of Marathon.

In anticipation of the Persian invasion, Athens had mobilized nearly its entire force of citizen hoplite warriors, around ten thousand soldiers. Together with another thousand hoplites from the allied *polis* of Plataea, they prevented the Persians from exiting the plains near Marathon and proceeding into the Greek mainland. The Persians, supported by a navy of some six hundred ships, significantly outnumbered the Athenian/Plataean forces. Following five days during which neither side commenced fighting, the Greeks, under the command of Miltiades, finally charged and overwhelmed the Persians, and the work of slaughter began. Protected by bronze armor, organized into well-trained phalanxes, and armed with long iron-tipped pikes, the Greek forces methodically stabbed their way through the Persian lines. The historian Herodotus (c. 484–425 BCE) reported that some 6,400 Persians were killed, including several general officers, while only 192 Athenians and eleven Plataeans died: one of the most lopsided victories in history.

Battles of deep consequence often produce legends that, although unsupported by fact, exercise a hold upon the collective imagination. One such legend was that the god Pan appeared on the field of battle at Marathon and at a crucial juncture instilled mindless fear into the Persians, causing them to "*pan*ic." Another, more famous (and almost certainly legendary) story is that a messenger named Pheidippides was sent to Athens to proclaim the victory, running the entire distance of more than twenty-five miles. He delivered his message—"We were victorious!"—and reportedly died on the spot. In 1896, when the modern Olympic Games were

established (albeit with no precedent in the ancient Olympics Games), the legend was commemorated by the creation of the marathon race in honor of Pheidippides's famous run.

The Persians were unable to follow up in Greece for the next ten years. During that time, the leading politician in Athens, Themistocles (524-459 BCE), used the profits from a newly discovered vein of silver to build a formidable Athenian navy. The construction of this navy likely contributed significantly to the development of the Athenian democracy in much the same way that the *hoplite phalanx* had altered the government of the *poleis* in the Archaic Age. In need of large numbers of rowers for their new triremes (warships with three banks of oars), the governors of Athens offered full citizenship to landless residents of Attica in exchange for assuming this dangerous job. Indeed, the perils of sea battle extended beyond mortality in the Greek imagination, as Greeks believed proper burial in soil (not water) was a necessary prerequisite for entrance into the realm of Hades. Whatever the cultural dynamics of this arrangement, the removal of the property qualification for citizenship made Athens democractic; that is, all freeborn, native-born, adult, Athenian men had citizenship and could participate in the *ekklesia* and other organs of government. Even though it was broadly participatory, the Athenian system excluded women, slaves, and *metics* (foreign-born persons) not only from citizenship but from any kind of participation in civic or governmental affairs. For these and other reasons, modern students should be wary of easy comparisons between Athens and modern democracies.

In 481 BC, the Persian Emperor Xerxes I (r. 486–465) made preparations to attack Greece from Thrace. When news of the Persian plan reached Athens and Sparta, they joined with other *poleis* to establish a defensive alliance. The Persian army, supplied by their immense navy, moved along the Aegean coast from Thrace toward Athens. In order for Xerxes to reach Athens from the north, while also maintaining a close hold to naval supply and support from the east, the Persian army had to cross a narrow shoreline pass at Thermopylae. While the Athenian navy attempted to block the advance of the Persian ships at the Straits of Artemisium, the Greek alliance sent a force of about seven thousand, led by the Spartan king Leonidas, to halt the massive Persian land army, numbering in the hundreds of thousands according to exaggerated ancient sources. Once again, although ancient sources are not reliable for numbers, the fact that the Greeks were seriously outnumbered is not contested. The Greek forces held off the Persians for seven days, until they were outflanked and forced to retreat. This resulted in one of the most famous "last-stand" battles in history. In order for the main Greek force to retreat southward in safety, Leonidas formed a small rearguard of three hundred Spartans (including Leonidas himself), four hundred Thebans, and seven hundred Thespians to hold back the Persian main host. The tactic bought the Greeks time to redeploy, but nearly all of the defenders were killed. This delay did allow the Peloponnesian *poleis* to erect defenses across the Isthmus of Corinth and, perhaps more importantly, permitted Athens to evacuate its population to the Island of Salamis in the Saronic Gulf between Attica and the Peloponnesus.

Even though the Persian army occupied Boeotia and Attica and destroyed much of Athens, the Athenian navy survived the stalemate naval battle of Artemisium, retreated to the Saronic Gulf, and stood ready to prevent a direct Persian landing on the coast of the Peloponnesus. Although the Persian navy, with perhaps as many as three hundred triremes, outnumbered that of the Athenians, Themistocles's forces drew the Persian ships into a narrow strait between the island of Salamis and the Greek mainland. In such confines, the Persian numerical superiority was negated. In fact, Persian ships often merely got in each other's way. The Greeks, using their own triremes, drove a wedge through the Persian fleet, dividing it in half. During the Battle of Salamis, Greek boarding parties consisting of well-disciplined hoplite

soldiers proved far superior to the light infantry who guarded the Persian ships. In the end, most of the mighty Persian navy ended up at the bottom of the Saronic Gulf. Without the protection, supply, and transport capabilities of a numerically superior navy and with the legitimate fear that the Greeks would cut off his army from their base in Thrace and Asia Minor, Xerxes withdrew the rest of his ships and most of his army from Greece. The remaining Persian forces were defeated at Plataea in 479 BCE, ending the Second Persian War. Persia's efforts to gain control of the Eastern Mediterranean foundered, although the Persians did continue to monitor the Greek lands and to look for opportunities to press their claims once again.

Classical Period Athens and Sparta

Although the Greek forces were ultimately victorious, the Persian Wars destroyed most of the physical structure of Athens, thus necessitating a communal effort to rebuild and a strong incentive to prevent another outside invasion. Athenian history in this period must be read with those two concerns in mind.

For most of the two decades after the Persian Wars, the aristocrats of the *Areopagus*, led by Cimon, governed the city, but their power was ultimately supplanted by that of the *ekklesia*, the democratic assembly created by the reforms of Solon nearly a century earlier and led in this period first by the reformer Ephialtes and then for three decades by his protégé Pericles. In 461 BCE, Pericles and Ephialtes even succeeded in ostracizing Cimon, thus leaving the *Areopagus* fragmented and leaderless and the *ekklesia* triumphant. With the backing of the vast majority of citizens in the *ekklesia*, Pericles's faction strengthened the democratic elements of the Athenian state. Over the next three decades, Pericles instituted the payment of magistrates (judges and officials) and paid for common citizens to sit as jurors, allowing them to participate in government in ways formerly reserved for the wealthier aristocracy. In addition to governmental reform, Pericles oversaw the erection of a defensive network called the "long walls," which surrounded the city of Athens itself and stretched to the Piraeus harbor, nearly five miles away, thus securing access to the sea and protecting the harbor and city from attack by land. Pericles also continued the reconstruction of the city in the aftermath of the Persian destruction. The famous Parthenon, the temple of Athena located on the acropolis of Athens, is perhaps his best example of temple construction in this era, yet it is only one of dozens of such projects. Many of the great monuments of ancient Athens that are still visible today were constructed during the period of Pericles's preeminence. Pericles wished to make Athenians proud of their city and encouraged them to attend the meetings of the *ekklesia*, serve in magisterial offices, and participate actively in its government. As much as anything, Pericles was a radical democrat, seeking to expand the power of the *demos*, seeing himself more as "first citizen" than as a king or governor. He did, however, manipulate the political system to secure and maintain his own interests. For example, he took advantage of the lack of term limits on the office of strategos (ten commanders of the Athenian military), and he secured this powerful position every year for the last fourteen years of his life, thus ensuring his access to and control of the Athenian military. He also flouted the restrictions on Athenian citizenship (including laws he had championed) by obtaining and defending the privileges of his *metic* (foreign) mistress Aspasia of Miletus and by securing the legitimacy of their son. Most importantly, he used ostracism extensively to eliminate political rivals; given his oratorical abilities (the most important skill in the Athenian political milieu) and his ability to convince his fellow citizens of the legitimacy of his ideas, opposing Pericles outright in this period was akin to political suicide.

Of course, the reforms and projects of Ephialtes and Pericles required resources, more so than Athens itself commanded. The required funding came involuntarily from the treasury of the Delian League, a defensive alliance of *poleis* formed under the leadership of Cimon in 477 BC, just after the war with Persia. Originally headquartered on the island of Delos (for which the league was named) the ostensible purpose of the the alliance was to protect the Greek *poleis* in the region of the Aegean Sea from further Persian attack. Sparta, Corinth, and other *poleis* had formed a similar alliance known as the Peloponnesian League around the same time. However, under the watchful eye and manipulative hand of Pericles, the Delian League became a vehicle for Athenian dominance in the Aegean Sea. Indeed, scholars often refer to it as the "Athenian Empire." Using a threat from Egypt as a pretext, Pericles had the alliance's treasury (to which all participating *poleis* contributed) transferred to a "safer" location in Athens. The move has been characterized as one of the grandest embezzlements in history, and the treasury financed some of the most magnificent monuments ever constructed. In addition to appropriating the treasury for the beautification of Athens, Pericles and other Athenian leaders began pressing League members to adopt a common currency and to take up democratic reforms. When some *poleis* refused Athens's demands and attempted secession, Athens used their military (also funded by the League's treasury) to force continued compliance, even seizing the ships and productive mines of Thasos when that *polis* rebelled in 465 BCE. Needless to say, many other *poleis*, both those allied with Athens and those outside the Delian League, were not pleased with Athens's imperial maneuvers.

For its part, Sparta maintained its traditional system during the Classical period, though its prestige grew tremendously in the eyes of the other *poleis* due to the Spartans exploits at the Battle of Thermopylae and other military achievements. Sparta continued to exploit the *helots* and to retain the dominance of the Similars, who grew in number and power in the fifth century BCE. While it participated in and even provided leadership over the Peloponnesian League, the Spartans were not much interested in relations with other *poleis* unless their interests were threatened. With a currency of heavy iron bars (a purposeful "bar" to trade with other *poleis* since they only had value in Sparta) and with customs that by turns intimidated and intrigued outside observers (especially Athenians), the Spartans occupied a privileged and powerful, yet isolated, position in the Greek world.

In the decades after the Persian Wars, largely due to Athens's growing imperial might, tensions rose sharply between Sparta (and its Peloponnesian League allies) and Athens, the two great *poleis*—the one authoritarian, insulated, and stable, the other democratic, imperialist, and unstable. With two diametrically opposed powers assembling networks of supporters and fighting proxy wars in contested territories instead of attacking each other directly, the mid-fifth century BCE is not unlike the Cold War of the mid-twentieth century CE. Yet after pulling back from the brink of outright war several times in that era, the two alliances finally plunged headlong into the definitive conflict of the Classical age.

The Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC)

The Greeks descended into a prolonged and destructive war in the late fifth century BCE, called the Peloponnesian War. While the conflict as a whole persisted for nearly three decades, the fighting did not remain constant throughout that timespan. Several periods of intense conflict were interspersed with periods of truce, but it was clear during each truce that both sides were simply preparing for the resumption of hostilities. In the minds of the leaders of both sides, the

war was a contest to determine whether Athens or Sparta would set the political, economic, and cultural agenda for Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean. Sparta, superior in land forces, attempted to bring the war to Athens overland. Athens's formidable navy attempted to cripple Sparta by attacking the colonies of Sparta's coalition and by blockading the coastline of the Peloponnesus. However, Athens was well protected from a direct attack of Sparta's phalanxes by its "Long Walls," and Sparta's practiced self-sufficiency rendered the Athenian blockade less effective than it might otherwise have been. With such different strategies separating the two sides, they were never able to fight any kind of decisive battle, such as those that decided the Persian Wars. The war thus degenerated into a prolonged stalemate, with both sides scrambling with increasing desperation for strategies that would give their forces the advantage.

The main primary source for the Peloponnesian War is the landmark historical account written by the Athenian general and historian Thucydides, a direct participant in the conflict. The value of this work extends far beyond its description of the events of the war. Thucydides's history, read and reread by thousands through succeeding generations, has exercised a profound influence upon Western literature as a whole and the literary genre of history in particular. For Thucydides, history is an entity to be meditated upon and criticized: a body of evidence from which one draws moral lessons. The notion that ignorance of history condemns one to repeat the mistakes of the past thus arguably originates in his work. Among the key events recorded and commented upon by Thucydides, one finds the following:

- The funeral oration of Pericles (431 BCE) was delivered to honor the Athenian dead in the first year of the war. It has been compared to Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address—also a funeral oration delivered to citizens of a democratic nation in time of destructive and divisive civil war:
    - *Pericles:* "Such was the end of these men … the value of such a spirit is not to be expressed in words.… The sacrifice which they collectively made was individually repaid to them; for they received again each one for himself a praise which grows not old, and the noblest of all sepulchers—I speak not of that in which their remains are laid, but of that in which their glory survives, and is proclaimed always and on every fitting occasion both in word and deed" (249).
    - *Lincoln*: "But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract" (261).
- The Athenian Plague: A deadly disease struck Athens in 430 BC, killing about thirty thousand, including Pericles and his sons. Although Athens survived the plague, it never fully recovered from the loss of artisans, soldiers, and sailors, desperately needed in time of war.
- The Sicilian Expedition: During the Sicilian Expedition (415–413 BC), Athens launched a massive naval campaign against Sparta's ally Syracuse, a large *polis* on the island of Sicily. The campaign was a disaster, and most of the Athenian invasion force was destroyed.
- The Civil War in Corcyra: In arguably his most introspective section, Thucydides uses the example of an earlier, internal conflict in the *polis* of Corcyra to criticize the jingoism of those who continued to push for war, even when the costs of the

conflict began to mount dangerously. For example, Thucydides writes the following:

- "War, which destroys the easy routines of people's daily lives, is a violent schoolmaster, and assimilates the dispositions of most people to the prevailing circumstances. So then, affairs in the cities were being torn apart by faction, and those struggles that occurred in the latter stages of the war - through news, I suppose, of what had occurred earlier in other cities - pushed to greater lengths the extravagance with which new plots were devised, both in the inventiveness of the various attempts at revolt and in the unheard-of nature of the subsequent acts of retaliation. And people altered, at their pleasure, the customary significance of words to suit their deeds: irrational daring came to be considered the 'manly courage of one loyal to his party'; prudent delay was thought a fair-seeming cowardice; a moderate attitude was deemed a mere shield for lack of virility, and a reasoned understanding with regard to all sides of an issue meant that one was indolent and of no use for anything. Rash enthusiasm for one's cause was deemed the part of a true man; to attempt to employ reason in plotting a safe course of action, a specious excuse for desertion. One who displayed violent anger was 'eternally faithful,' whereas any who spoke against such a person was viewed with suspicion."

Thucydides was joined in his veiled criticism of the war by the tragedian Euripides, who examines the costs of war most acutely in his *Women of Troy*, and the comic playwright Aristophanes, particularly in his comedy *Lysistrata* wherein the eponymous female character persuades the women of Greece to withhold sexual privileges from their husbands until they cease fighting the war.

After more than two decades of stalemate, Sparta reached out to the Persian Empire for help in overcoming Athens, a move that was both necessary (given that Persia had a navy strong enough to neutralize Athens's sea power) and ironic (given that Spartans had fought heroically against Persia only a few decades previously). With Persian help, the Peloponnesians were able both to cut off Athens's grain supply from the Black Sea and to foment rebellions among Delian League *poleis*. With most of its fleet destroyed in the Battle of Aegospotami (405 BCE) and with its citizens facing siege and starvation, Athens surrendered. Corinth and Thebes, members of the Peloponnesian League and allies of Sparta, took a very hard line, demanding that Athens be destroyed and its citizens enslaved. Militant Sparta, proving most clement among the victors, stripped the *polis* of its fleet, its walls, its colonies, and what remained of its democratic government. Athens was ruled for a time by a Spartan- and Persian-backed oligarchy known as the "Thirty Tyrants." However, without the direct interference of Sparta, this government was quickly supplanted and democracy restored.

The aftermath of the war was a difficult time for Athens, with betrayal, corruption, and suspicion pervading the atmosphere. One of the casualties of this trouble was the philosopher Socrates, whose previous associations with unsavory characters (most notably Alcibiades, a traitor during the war, and Critias, one of the thirty tyrants) and criticism of democratic principles and practices led to his trial and execution in 399 BCE. In the ensuing decades, Athens did recover some measure of its previous position, although it never again reached its fifth-century heights. In spite of winning the war, Sparta weathered the subsequent years less well

than Athens. The *polis* of Thebes, a Spartan ally during the Peloponnesian War, developed its own military might and imperial pretensions in the early fourth century and dealt Sparta a stunning, comprehensive defeat at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE. Stripped by Thebes of its *helots*, the basis of its entire system, the Spartans never again occupied a prime political and military position in the Greek world.

The end of the Classical Period did not spell the end of Hellenic civilization, but the prolonged and destructive war left the *poleis* of Greece impoverished and many of their colonies politically adrift. Although Greek speakers would come to dominate the eastern Mediterranean during the next century, it would not be under the leadership of the *poleis* of the mainland. It came, instead, from the unlikely region of Macedonia to the north.

Classical culture

The culture of Classical Greece was both rich and varied. As noted, though Greeks felt an overarching connection to other Greeks, due to a shared spoken language, shared heritage, and some shared institutions (e.g., Olympic festival, Oracle of Delphi), each *polis* also had its own unique culture, or at least its own variation on the broader culture. This section explores a few important cultural products of Classical Greek civilization. Greek artists and literary figures in this period drew upon models and motifs that originated in earlier eras of Greek history, and their immense influence would continue to be felt, not only in subsequent eras of Greek civilization, but indeed throughout several millennia of Western civilization.

Pottery and Sculpture

Hellenic visual arts incorporated prior forms such as glazed pottery, inherited from Egypt and Mesopotamia, and adapted them to their own culture, tradition, and genius. Greek art moved through distinctive phases, roughly paralleling the historical periods outlined in this chapter. This may be illustrated through Greek pottery. The pottery of the Greek Dark Age, often called "geometric," consisted primarily of often-intricate patterns inscribed in the clay in a rather primitive execution of form. The Archaic Period featured motifs taken from nature, such as bulls, rams, and birds, or figures taken from mythology, such as the sphinx.

The execution of pottery improved markedly during the Classical period and featured two new types of decoration called black-figure and red-figure. Originating in Corinth, black-figure pottery was made by painting the principal figures onto the pottery with a glossy slip that turned black when fired. Highlights were added via scoring or using red or white pigments. Red-figure pottery is, in appearance, the reverse of black-figure, and it became the dominant style during the Classical Period. It was developed in Athens and constituted one of the principal exports from Attica during the period of the Athenian Empire. It was also in high demand and eventually produced in large quantities outside of Greece, particularly in the Italian Peninsula. With this technique, figures were outlined using charcoal to prevent the black slip glaze from covering them, allowing the natural red color of the clay to form the figure, which stood out against a black background. Details were added in a second phase, clarifying muscles or other elements of the figure, and the pot was fired again. This provided much greater detail and featured not only scenes drawn from mythology and Greek history, but also depictions of everyday life.

Like Greek pottery, Greek sculpture evolved in four major phases: geometric, archaic, classical, and Hellenistic. The genius of Greek sculpture lies in its treatment of the human form.

Archaic sculpture resembles, in many ways, the monumental sculpture of Egypt. For example, the famous *kouroi* (youths) of Delphi are depicted stylistically, facing front, hands clenched at the sides, with one foot forward of the other in a stately pose that is in reality impossible to maintain (unless one leg is significantly longer than the other). By the Classical period, humans were given a more realistic shape and relaxed pose. Examples include the Artemision Bronze, depicting either Zeus about to hurl a thunderbolt or Poseidon about to throw the trident; the Charioteer of Delphi; the *discobolus* (discus thrower) sculpted by Myron; the monumental temple statues of Zeus and Athena by Phidias; and the classical world's first acceptable female nudes, such as the Knidian Aphrodite sculpted by Praxiteles. Austere and aloof, yet graceful and beautiful, these works nearly deify the human form, making the body a work of art in itself. Though renowned for its realism, classical sculpture also tends toward austerity; faces in particular display serenity and even humility. The range of emotion and movement captured by sculpture is limited in this period. Sculptural techniques and emphases continued to evolve and develop in the Hellenistic Period, which will be discussed below.

Architecture

Of all of the Greek contributions to Western civilization, architecture is among the most important. The Greek architectural principles of symmetry and simplicity, along with architectural components like columns, lintels, entablatures, and pediments, form the core of all Western architecture, both practical and monumental. It is often remarked that people in the West inhabit Greek buildings, just as they think Greek thoughts.

The most recognizable architectural piece from the Classical Era is the Parthenon, the temple of Athena on the Acropolis in Athens. It was completed in 438 BC, having been commissioned by Pericles in the decade immediately prior to the beginning of the Peloponnesian War and built in part with funds from the treasury of the Delian League. Considered the hallmark of Classical Greek architecture, it is one of the world's most impressive and influential buildings. Dedicated to the city's patroness, the temple featured a forty-one-foot-tall sculpture of Athena Parthenos ("Athena the Virgin"). Executed by the legendary sculptor Phidias, whose work was copied or emulated by other sculptors through succeeding millennia, it was fitted with an estimated ton of gold. Ninety-two *metopes* (panel sculptures) surround the temple near the top, organized into the following programs:

- the *gigantomachy* (battle between the Olympian gods and the giants) on the east
- the *amazonomachy* (battle between the Athenians and the Amazons) on the west
- the *centauromachy* (battle of Theseus and the Lapiths against the Centaurs) on the south
- the *metopes* on the north, which are in poor condition but thought to represent the Trojan War.

In addition to the *metopes* and other friezes adorning the exterior, the Parthenon exemplifies the art of optical illusion. *Entasis*, the technique by which tall columns are made to bulge slightly in the middle so that they, in fact, appear to be straight, is one example. According to conventional wisdom, there is not one straight line in the entire building. The building has been studied and copied so frequently and so consistently through the ages that its impact on Western civilization and architecture cannot be overstated.

Apart from temples and altars, the Greeks made significant architectural contributions in the area of urban architecture and planning: theaters and stadiums, the *nymphaeum* (fountain), the *propylon* (gateway), the *agora* (public square), the *bouleuterion* (circular town hall), the *mausoleum* (tomb), and the *stoa* (storied colonnade).

Theater

Greek theater originated as part of religious celebration during Classical period Athens. Drama consisted at first of only a chorus; the playwright Thespis (c. sixth century) is credited with adding an individual actor in the 530s BCE. Aeschylus (c. 525–456), often called the "father of tragedy," added a second actor, and Sophocles (c. 497–405) added a third, allowing for greater dramatic expression and intrigue. In the late sixth century BCE, the *polis* of Athens established a dramatic competition as part of the *Dionysia*, the festival in honor of the god Dionysus. Sophocles is considered the most successful playwright, having composed some 123 plays, fourteen of which won the festival competition and seven of which survive. Aeschylus and Euripides possess similar stature. Drama was very important to Athens and became a part of its self-identity. Citizens were required to attend the plays at the *Dionysia*, and the city magistrates in charge of the festival monitored the content of the plays to make sure they reinforced Athenian values. Rather than simply functioning as propaganda pieces, however, the plays were remarkably self-reflective and at times cunningly subversive. The festival, which spanned a period of five days, included three types of drama:

- *Tragedy.* In his work *Poetics*, Aristotle described tragedy as "an imitation of action that is serious … with incidents arousing pity and fear … in order to produce its *catharsis* [purging] of such emotions" among the members of the audience (12). The idea that a tragedy ends badly for the protagonist captures the popular conception of the dramatic form. Tragedy explores the consequences of failing to live up to the ethical values embraced by society. These unpleasant consequences sometimes affect multiple generations.
- *Comedy.* Aristotle defined a comedy as unrealistic action that goes from bad to good. Comedy may also be characterized as a play that ends well for the protagonist. As with tragedy, comedy explored Athenian values, though it did so by making light of serious issues. The most successful and enduring of the Athenian comic playwrights is Aristophanes, eleven of whose comedies survive.
- *Satyr Play.* A satyr play—from which the term *satire* is taken—is a tragicomic burlesque that featured choruses of mythological goat-men (satyrs) as a contrast to the seriousness of tragedy. Satyr plays featured nymph-chasing scenes, drunkenness, practical jokes, and an overall spirit of frivolity. Entrants in the *Dionysia* competition were required to compose one satyr play in addition to three tragedies and one comedy.

Sophocles's three Theban tragedies—*Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*—are among the best-known plays in Western civilization. Aristotle considered *Oedipus Tyrannus*—or *Oedipus Rex*, as it is also known in the West—the best example of tragedy, a conclusion that many other critics also arrived at over the succeeding centuries, albeit sometimes for different reasons. Performed first at the *Dionysia* in 429 BCE, the play's central theme revolves around the question of fate versus free will. The tale of Oedipus serves as a

warning against *hubris*, or false overconfidence, and instructs its audience to accept their limitations, their fate, and their place in the universe vis-à-vis the gods.

According to the play's narrative, Oedipus is born to King Laius and Queen Jocasta of Thebes. The blind prophet Tiresias prophesies upon Prince Oedipus's birth that the infant will eventually kill his father and marry his mother, breaking two great social taboos: patricide and incest. This, it appears then, is the prince's fate. Fearing this, his parents arrange for a shepherd to abandon him on a hill to die. The child is discovered and given to the king and queen of Corinth, who are childless, and is raised in that *polis* as a prince. Oedipus learns of the prophecy of Tiresias, although he remains ignorant of his true origins. Believing the Corinthian king and queen to be his true parents, he flees Corinth in an effort to nullify the prophecy. By the exercise of free will, he believes that he has thwarted fate. Traveling in self-imposed exile, he comes to a crossroads where a stranger threatens him. During the ensuing fight, he kills the man, albeit in self-defense. Oedipus next meets the Sphinx, a terrible monster that eats the citizens of Thebes. The Sphinx poses a riddle: "What creature walks with four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs at evening?" He answers, "Man," who as a baby crawls on all fours during the "morning" of his life, as an adult walks on two legs, and uses a cane in his old age, the "evening" of life. Oedipus is the first to solve the riddle, and by so doing he destroys the power of the Sphinx and liberates the city. The grateful Thebans welcome Oedipus as a savior. He then marries the recently widowed Queen Jocasta and becomes king. Thereafter, a plague strikes the city. Consulting the Oracle of Delphi, the Thebans learn that they are harboring the murderer of Laius, their former king. The plague, declares the Oracle, is the result of the murder of Laius and the failure to bring his killer to justice. Oedipus decrees that the murderer, when found, will be exiled. During the ensuing investigation, it becomes clear to both Jocasta and Oedipus that Oedipus himself is the murderer: Laius is the one he killed at the crossroads. Jocasta, unable to live with the terrible realization that she has both married her own son and had children by him (including a daughter, Antigone), hangs herself. Upon finding her swaying from the cords tied around her neck, Oedipus takes her body down and weeps. At the climax of the tragedy, a messenger comes from the royal chambers telling the story of what Oedipus does next:

> He rips off her brooches, the long gold pins holding her robes—and lifting them high, looking straight up into the points, he digs them down the sockets of his eyes, crying, 'You, you'll see no more the pain I suffered, all the pain I caused! Too long you looked on the ones you never should have seen, blind to the ones you longed to see, to know! Blind from this hour on! Blind in the darkness—blind!' His voice like a dirge, rising over and over raising the pins, raking them down his eyes. And at each stroke blood spurts from the roots, splashing the beard, a swirl of it, nerves and clots—black hail of blood pulsing, gushing down. These are the griefs that burst upon them both, coupling man and woman. The joy they had so lately, was deep joy indeed. Now, in this one day, wailing, madness and doom, death, disgrace, all the griefs in the world that you can name, all are theirs forever (237).

Customarily, violent action in Greek drama took place off stage—and Sophocles uses the convention of a messenger to relate the action to the audience—but next Oedipus enters, blood streaming from his empty eye sockets. He confirms the sentence he himself pronounced upon the murderer, and leaves the city, a blind exile. But the story does not end there. In *Oedipus at*

Colonus, the former king, having suffered for the breach of taboo, returns to honor the gods and is taken alive into the earth in an act of mercy, an apotheosis whereby Oedipus becomes a hero-god. The legacy of Oedipus's *hubris* continue to afflict his heirs and city, however, and the sorry state of his cursed children and the continued instability of Thebes, now ruled by Jocasta's brother Creon, is recounted in *Antigone*.

Music

Music played an integral role in Greek drama, serving, according to Plato in his book *The Republic*, to produce a variety of emotions in the listener. Greek music was organized by different groups of pitches into modes, each named after an ancient Greek tribe, and each of which, according to Plato, produced a particular emotional or spiritual state. The Phrygian mode produced sensuality, whereas the Dorian mode was harsh and violent. The dramatic potential of modes and music was apparent to the Greeks, serving the function of a modern movie soundtrack and more. Both Plato and Aristotle maintained that listening to music caused the emotional or spiritual state associated with a mode to be manifest in the listener, and advised that youth should only be exposed to certain modes: a youth raised listening to music that promoted the wrong kinds of behavior would grow up to be a bad person. Although the modern listener might disagree with the ethical conclusions drawn by Plato or Aristotle, there is little doubt that music does influence emotion and attitude.

Music theory, or the methodical and scientific treatment of the structures of music as understood in the West, was also a Greek invention. Pythagoras (c. 570–495) is credited with the arithmetic definition of music intervals expressed as ratios between *tonoi* (notes): 1:1 (unison), 2:1 (octave), 3:2 (fifth), and 4:3 (fourth). Pythagorean tuning produced an arrangement of *tonoi* similar to modern scales, using a series of fifths (3:2) beginning with a root tone, or tonic pitch. Thus, beginning at C, one may move upward in pitch by the interval of a fifth and produce the tones G-D-A-E-B-F#-C#, and moving downward by fifths produce the *tonoi* C-F-B♭-E♭-A♭-D♭-G♭-C♭, accounting for all of the pitches in the Western musical system.

Music theory and the ethos of music became part of the educational curriculum in Rome and Europe in later ages, continuing to the present. Although ancient Greek music cannot be reproduced authentically, its influence is undeniable and profound.

Religion

Like the Mesopotamians, the Greeks produced a pantheon of gods and goddesses, grounded in a mythology that accounted for the creation of the universe and of humankind. Hesiod's *Theogony* (discussed above) helped standardize the Greek pantheon and its mythology. Later commentators, such as Plato and Herodotus, produced their own grouping of the Olympian gods, centered in the number twelve, called the *dodecatheon* (the twelve gods). The following list of the "canonical" *dodecatheon* includes Roman equivalents in parentheses where applicable, demonstrating the Hellenistic adaptation and spreading of the Greek pantheon in Classical times: Zeus (Jupiter), Hera (Juno), Poseidon (Neptune), Demeter (Ceres), Athena (Minerva), Dionysus (Bacchus), Apollo, Artemis (Diana), Ares (Mars), Aphrodite (Venus), Hephaestus (Vulcan), and Hermes (Mercury). Hades (Pluto), whose realm was in the underworld and not upon Mt. Olympus, is not always included in the twelve. Plato, in his dialogue *Phaedrus*, links the twelve to the signs of the zodiac and the months of the year. The gods dominated the Greek

conceptualization of orderly space and time. Each god or goddess was customarily depicted with their attributes (dress and equipment), allowing illiterate persons to recognize them on sight, creating a sort of divine symbolic vocabulary. Thus Ares, god of war, is customarily depicted with a helmet and shield, while Demeter, goddess of fertility and of harvests, is frequently depicted with a sheaf of wheat. The gods were a pervasive element of Greek art and culture; their mythological stories were widely known, and their influence went often uncontested among the general populace.

For a modern, Western audience more accustomed to the beliefs and practices of the Abrahamic religions, the ancient Greek gods and goddesses come across as strange and perhaps disconcerting. After all, Greek deities were depicted in mythological texts as having human characteristics, particularly unstable emotions like anger, jealousy, and lust (the latter emotion resulting in the numerous demi-gods like Herakles (Hercules), Achilles, and Aeneas, who populate the mythology). They were not viewed as omnipotent, insomuch as their power was exercised primarily in their own realms--Poseidon in the sea, Hades in the underworld, and so forth. In the mythology, gods are often in conflict with one another--even those who share a close relationship--and they proceed with caution when venturing into the realm of another god. Zeus, king of the gods, frequently comes across as a henpecked husband, as the jealous and exasperated Hera vents her frustrations at both his philandering and his failure to see to her interests. Moreover, Greek religion had no dogma, or accepted body of beliefs, and the only universal, behavioral prescription was the requirement to make frequent sacrifice. Gods were worshipped on the level of the *polis* rather than the individual, and religious festivals and other sacred occasions called for huge public gatherings that probably looked more like a patriotic parade or political inauguration than a church, synagogue, or mosque service.

Why then did Greeks believe in the mythology and worship such beings in these ways? Scholars have suggested two answers to this question. First, the lives of the gods and goddesses presented a stark contrast to the drudgery of everyday, mortal life in ancient Greece. They could not die or become ill; they dwelt in opulent circumstances on Mount Olympus or in another temple constructed for them by their mortal adherents, and they dined on ambrosia and nectar, the perfect food and drink. Put simply, they lived the ultimate life and were thus worthy of veneration. Second, Greek religion placed very little, indeed almost no, emphasis on the afterlife. When the mythological texts discuss the realm of Hades--as in Odysseus's journey to the underworld in book 11 of the *Odyssey*--they do so in terms that are hardly flattering (e.g., the shade of Achilles telling Odysseus that he would rather be a slave in the upper world than be confined as he is in the realm of Hades). Greeks believed the gods and goddesses--particularly the patron of their *polis*--would grant their communities temporal, mortal blessings if they performed the required sacrifices. Eternal considerations and the connections between ethical, moral requirements and the will of the gods were simply not part of Greek religious conceptions. Nevertheless, Greeks took their religious responsibilities very seriously.

In addition to the Olympian cults, the so-called Mystery Cults were a part of Greek religious practice as far back as the Mycenaean Era. The hallmarks of the Mystery Cults were (1) individual initiation into ritual and ceremony (as opposed to the civic-based ritual of the Olympian cults) that reenacted the sacred, mythological narrative of the deity in question and (2) a covenant not to reveal the rituals to the uninitiated. Over time, some Mystery Cults came to emphasize the afterlife (accessible through the Mystery deity) and to include powerful priesthoods who controlled initiation rites, though some of these developments are more

germane to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Important Hellenic Mystery Cults included the following:

- *The Eleusinian Mysteries*. Manifesting sometime around 1500 BCE, the Eleusinian Cult was centered upon the worship of Demeter, the goddess of fertility, and her daughter, Persephone. According to myth, Persephone was gathering flowers when Hades abducted her and took her to his underworld realm. Distressed at her inability to rescue her daughter, and in an effort to coerce Zeus to intervene, Demeter caused a severe famine that nearly led to the starvation of all humanity. Moved by the cries of the hungry, Zeus intervened, brokering an arrangement by which Persephone would rise from the underworld for eight months each year, producing agricultural fertility and abundance. The cycle of rebirth has been likened to a resurrection motif, with possible Egyptian or Minoan origins. Males and females, freedmen and slaves were all allowed initiation. Initiates of various levels hoped to participate in their own eventual rebirth, or resurrection, and in an idyllic existence in the afterlife.
- *Orphic Mysteries*. Orpheus, the famed musician of ancient mythology, could tame the wild beast or even stop the waves of the sea through the enchantments produced by his music. As in the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Orphic initiate hoped to gain some advantage over death, in the case of the Orphic Mysteries by ending *metempsychosis* (reincarnation or the cycle of rebirth). The cult held that the human soul was immortal, that after death it suffered for bad conduct and was bound in a cycle of rebirth or reincarnation, and that this cycle could be broken through a life of virtue. The myth of Orpheus and his wife, Eurydice, tells the story of her death and his dramatic journey into the underworld to save her. Using the entrancing power of his harp, he soothes the furies of fiery Hades with his music and passes by them unharmed. Orpheus then searches the Elysian Fields, the paradise of the underworld, until he finds her, then starts back to the surface of the earth with her. But the gods have set a condition upon her return to mortality: he must not look back at her until they both pass out of the underworld. When he reaches the upper world, he accidentally glances back at her before she crosses the threshold. She then vanishes and returns to the underworld, leaving Orpheus alone in his grief. Despite his failure to resuscitate Eurydice, Orpheus was thought to possess power over death and the underworld, thus explaining the appeal of his cult. In addition to performing the initiation rites of the cult, Orphic adherents adopted an ascetic lifestyle that was thought to purify their souls and allow them to break free from *metempsychosis*.

Mystery religions continued to evolve and became even more popular in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, in response to the cultural transformation and dislocation of those eras. These developments will be discussed below.

Philosophy

Although the list of Greek contributions to Western civilization is long and impressive, including drama, art, architecture, music, politics, and government, their most unique and

important contribution is arguably philosophy. Philosophy is premised upon the idea that the universe, indeed existence, may be understood through the systematic exercise of questioning (doubt) and reasoning (finding proof). Philosophy may be organized into several topical divisions, including physics (the study of the natural world and the physical makeup of the universe), metaphysics (the study of the nature of reality), epistemology (the study of the nature of knowledge), ethics (the exploration of the nature of right and wrong), logic (the study of the essentials of proper reasoning), and aesthetics (the study of questions of beauty and taste). Several major movements dominate the narrative of ancient Greek philosophy:

Pre-Socratics. The philosophers who came before the Athenian Socrates are generally divided into two main groups, or "schools": the Milesian School and the Pythagorean School. Both schools existed on the geographical fringes of the Greek world, with the Milesian School centered in the city of Miletus in Asia Minor, and the Pythagorean School centered in Italy. Both schools addressed questions of physics, speculating on the origin and nature of the physical universe. Thales of Miletus (ca. 624–546) and others debated the nature of matter, seeking the primary substance out of which the universe was created. For Thales, that substance was water, while for Anaximenes (a subsequent Milesian thinker), it was air. The Pythagoreans, for their part, seemed more interested in understanding the laws or principles by which the universe came into existence and was held together. They considered the universe to be a manifestation of perfect harmony, the music of the spheres, exhibited through number and ratio (from which we take the word "rational"—that is, "that which may be known as a ratio"). Pythagoreans taught that when humans discovered and lived by that harmony, they would experience a corresponding harmonious life. Although not scientists in the modern sense, these thinkers assumed that the universe operated upon firm principles or laws and that its existence could be understood by the exercise of reason, which in turn could lead to a better life for humans.

Socrates and Plato. Socrates (469–399) was more interested in questions of ethics and epistemology. Although he left no writings of his own and is therefore known principally through the works written by his student Plato (c.427-347 BCE), his influence was, and is, immense. An undeviating skeptic, he famously asserted that his wisdom consisted in "knowing that I know nothing." His method, known as the Socratic method (Gr. *elengkhos*), consisted of asking questions as part of a dialogue between two or more persons, eliciting truth through the answers given. Incorrect hypotheses are thus eliminated, revealing, it is hoped, some kernel of remaining truth. Because Socrates did not leave any written records of his own, and because he is the operative character in all of Plato's dialogues, it is difficult to determine where the thoughts of the former end and those of the latter begin; Plato was certainly no mere parrot for the teachings of Socrates. Together they explored a wide variety of issues, from the nature of the soul to the nature of justice, to the question of whether knowledge is innate (meaning that knowledge is a "present remembering" of something we knew before we were born and have forgotten) or acquired only in this life.

One of Plato's most influential works is his famous dialogue on politics and government, *The Republic*. Although by no means the only famous allegory taken from the book, Plato's allegory of the cave is perhaps the most well-known portion of the work. This story captures Plato's (and perhaps Socrates's) thoughts on a variety of issues, including the nature of reality, the process of knowledge apprehension, and the proper pursuit of the philosopher. In this section of the dialogue, Socrates proposes that the world is a cave, and all humans exist in the near-

darkness, chained so that they cannot move. Behind them is a fire that casts shadows on the back wall of the cave. Since the people are locked permanently in place staring at the cave's back wall, they believe the shadows they see on the wall are real things. Socrates then explores what would happen if one of the prisoners is freed from the chains and turns around to view the fire. His first response is pain and disorientation, since his eyes are unaccustomed to the brightness of the fire. With time, however, he learns that the shadows he and his fellow prisoners have been seeing are only dim reflections of a greater reality. But the fire, of course, is not ultimate reality; that is found outside the cave. So, the person climbs up the rugged ascent that leads to the mouth of the cave, eventually emerging into the sunlight. Unaccustomed to the light, he finds himself once again in an agonizing blindness. Gradually his sight adjusts, and he first can see the shadows cast by real objects in full light, then the reflections of objects on water, then the objects themselves, and finally even the sun itself. Excited by the discovery of a new world and the knowledge that his former life was largely false, he returns to the cave to free the others. However, once inside the cave, he is again blinded. The chained inhabitants resent being told that they know only illusion and partial truths and mock the person, saying, "up he went seeing, and down he came blind." The inhabitants of the cave thus determine to reject the teachings of the traveler and to kill anyone who attempts to unchain them.

The allegory is a metaphor for education, among other things, reinforcing Plato's doctrine of forms. Plato taught that sensory data was inherently misleading, since ultimate reality lay in ideal types or ideas that he called "forms." A student seeking philosophical enlightenment first sees and understands the shadowy manifestations of physical forms as if made by flickering firelight, then sees the firmer shadow cast in radiant sunlight, then the reflection, then the object itself, and he finally beholds the truth itself as an ideal, the pure form compared to which all sensory objects are lesser, incomplete manifestations. The discovery of truth—education—is, then, a progression from a sensible world bound by darkness, unsteady light, and incomplete knowledge into an intelligible and rational world that becomes clearer and clearer until the pure truth can be seen and known. Plato is thus a rationalist (one who finds greater meaning in the realm of ideas than in observation) and a mathematician, for mathematics, like Plato's version of reality, inherently rests on maxims or ideal types (e.g., the notion that 2 + 2 always equals 4, or the idea that two parallel lines will never get closer *ad infinitum*). Plato is the father of the fundamental, logical approach known as deduction, the process of starting with arguments or principles (i.e., forms) and finding data or examples to support that position.

Socrates's methods of inquiry revealed the ignorance of those persons among his contemporaries who thought they had everything figured out. Like the traveler who had seen the truth outside the cave and returned to tell of it, he deeply annoyed those with whom he spoke. As in the cave allegory, where, "if the inhabitants of the cave could lay hands upon him, they would kill him," so too did Socrates's Athenian enemies eventually lay hands upon him, using their political influence and Socrates's bad reputation to convict him and sentence him to death. Socrates was offered a chance to escape prison and execution, but chose to remain in prison and drink the deadly cup of poison, preferring it to the renunciation of his principles.

Rather than take up the wandering life of his master, Plato established a school in Athens called the Academy (est. 385 BCE). The Academy operated as an important center of learning for nearly a millennium until the Christian Roman emperor Justinian disbanded it in 529 CE. Following its dissolution, some of the still-pagan professors moved to Jundishapur in Persia, and that school's method and many of its graduates were later incorporated into the Muslim House of

Wisdom in Baghdad, where the teachings of Plato continued to influence scholars throughout the Middle Ages.

Aristotle. The student of Plato and the teacher of Alexander, Aristotle likewise founded an ancient school, called the Lyceum. Known by later generations of thinkers as "the philosopher" or "the master," Aristotle wrote on nearly every conceivable philosophical topic, from physics to metaphysics, to botany and medicine, to politics and poetry. He rejected Plato's belief in the immortality of the soul, as well as the doctrine of forms. For Aristotle, reality is found in what he calls "the substance": that is, in individual, observable objects and phenomena. Unlike his teacher, Aristotle was an empiricist, one who gathers sensory data, observes the behavior of said data, and forms broader conclusions after careful observation, a process known as induction. He operated, in other words, like a scientist rather than like a mathematician. Also unlike Plato, Aristotle did not write dialogues; rather, he wrote treatises, the goals of which were to provide proper definitions of concepts and to place phenomena into distinguishable categories. In his famous *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, he defined virtue as a mean between two extremes: excess and defect. Thus the virtue called courage was a mean between recklessness (excess) and cowardice (defect). Although Alfred North Whitehead stated that "all philosophy is a footnote to Plato," many of those footnotes belong to Aristotle. Popularized through the expansion of Hellenistic culture, his philosophy was adapted and adopted by Muslims and Christians alike, woven thereby into the fabric of Western civilization. Among medieval European scholars, he was known simply as "the philosopher," and Dante labeled him "the master of those who know."

Conclusion

Having traced the origins of Hellenic achievements, we next turn to the Hellenistic Period, when the culture of Greece and some elements of Greek social organization transcended the bounds of the Greek lands and mixed and merged with other civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean. The figure who brought these momentous changes to pass was Alexander the Great.

CHAPTER 3

The Hellenistic World

> Plato wrote a book on the One Ideal Constitution, but because of its forbidding character he could not persuade anyone to adopt it; but Alexander established more than seventy cities among savage tribes, and sowed all Asia with Grecian magistracies, and thus overcame its uncivilized and brutish manner of living. Although few of us read Plato's *Laws*, yet hundreds of thousands have made use of Alexander's laws, and continue to use them. . . . If, then, philosophers take the greatest pride in civilizing and rendering adaptable the intractable and untutored elements in human character, and if Alexander has been shown to have changed the savage natures of countless tribes, it is with good reason that he should be regarded as a very great philosopher.
>
> Plutarch, *De Fortuna Alexandri*

The culture of ancient Greece rests firmly at the heart of Western Civilization, but it does so to some extent in spite of the Greeks themselves. A highly xenophobic people, the Greeks tried to keep themselves aloof from other peoples, whom they considered inferior and even backward and barbaric. It is thus highly ironic that the Greeks came to occupy such a dominant position in the lives of so many subsequent peoples.

Western Civilization as a recognizable entity emerged only when Greek culture was infused into the political context of empire. This infusion allowed Greek culture to penetrate and influence--one might even say master--the peoples of Europe and the Near East irrevocably. However, Greek culture was itself transformed through this process, in that it was adopted into pre-existing cultures in a wide variety of contexts and amalgamated with existing traditions. This fundamental transformation began with the conquests of Alexander the Great who, as a Macedonian king (and later Persian emperor) educated by Aristotle in the Greek intellectual tradition, served as a perfect model of cultural fusion. The world--indeed the civilization--created by these conquests is labeled Hellenistic, meaning “Greek-like.” It is “like” Greek in that it rests on a foundation of Greek culture, but Alexander’s massive territorial conquests and imperial absorption of widely varied peoples naturally incorporated other ways of governing, thinking, and viewing the world. Alexander thus created a rich and varied civilization that continued to transform and influence others, especially the Romans, over the next several centuries. Without Alexander, Plato and Aristotle would not serve as the twin pillars of western thought, and the Greek aesthetic would not dominate Western concepts of art, architecture, literature, and drama.

Alexander the Great

The region of Macedon, considered a backward and barbarous province by the Hellenic *poleis*, first rose to prominence under Philip II (382–336 BCE), father of Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE). Philip built a well-trained army of professional soldiers and cavalry, modifying the *hoplite phalanx* and making it more effective, with the intention of conquering the *poleis* to the south and becoming master of Greece. In 338 BC, Philip defeated a combined force from the *poleis* of Corinth and Thebes, establishing effective control of virtually all the mainland, with the exception of Sparta. In 337 Philip formed a Greek alliance called the League of Corinth, which

supplied an army of invasion. His ultimate target was Persia. Philip, however, was murdered by one of his own bodyguards before he could embark on his planned invasion. That task fell to his son and heir, Alexander, who was only twenty years old when he assumed the throne.

Alexander is one of the most remarkable persons in history, meriting the epithet "the Great." In a short span of twelve years, he established the largest empire the world had seen, stretching from the Ionian Sea in the west to the Himalaya Mountains in the east and including parts of Central Asia and the Indus valley and all of Persia, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt, Anatolia, Greece, and Macedonia. He was arguably undefeated in battle—and he fought many, many battles. He conquered both of the great empires of the ancient Near East: Egypt and Persia. He was deified in his own lifetime, being proclaimed the Son of the god Amun (understood by the Greeks and certainly by Alexander himself to be the equivalent of Zeus) at the temple of Siwa in the Libyan Desert. He established about twenty cities named for himself, the most famous of which is Alexandria in Egypt. Most importantly, at least for its long-term impact, Alexander pursued a policy of fusion, the blending of various political, social, and especially cultural forms into a syncretistic whole. In so doing, he ensured not only that Greek culture would henceforth be a fundamental, indispensable component of Western civilization, but also that it would be adaptable to local and regional circumstances.

Alexander's conquests occurred in three phases. Proceeding from the territorial base in mainland Greece inherited from his father, he first moved south through Asia Minor and Palestine to Egypt, all of which were under Persian control, quickly taking control of these regions--especially key ports--to make certain the Persian navy could not attack the Aegean and force his main army to return home. Second, between 334 and 331 BC, he engaged the armies of the Persian Emperor Darius III (380-330 BCE) in Mesopotamia and Persia. At the Battle of Gaugamela (331 BCE), Alexander's forces completely routed the Persian army, despite being vastly outnumbered, and the emperor hastily fled from the field of battle. By 328, Alexander controlled Persia, the Near East, Egypt, and Greece, and he installed himself as emperor of all these regions. Third, he continued eastward, conquering lands on the borders of Central Asia (the regions known as Bactria and Sogdiana) and the Indus River valley. He engaged defenders at the Hydaspes River in 326, and, for the first time, the Macedonians joined battle against a foe armed with elephant cavalry. Alexander intended to push the war as far east as the Bay of Bengal and the mouth of the Ganges River (thought at the time to be the eastern end of the earth's landmass), but his troops—exhausted from a decade of near-continuous campaigning—mutinied and forced the young king to return to Babylon, where he died in 323 BC at the age of 32. Had Alexander survived, he almost certainly would have returned to India, since he had ordered the training of a large number of Persian troops in the strategies and tactics of the Macedonian *phalanx*, in order to replace his exhausted and mutinous Macedonian warriors.

It should come as no surprise that historians have debated his purported social, political, and military successes over the centuries. Alexander has detractors who point to the short duration of the state he created (less than a decade) and other perceived shortcomings. Disputations notwithstanding, Alexander's profound influence is undeniable: one cannot understand subsequent Western history without studying and comprehending Alexander and his heritage. Some would go so far as to claim that world history in general cannot be understood absent Alexander.

No matter how Alexander is viewed through the historical or cultural lens, one enduring question remains: how did he do it? Although there are many potential factors—or combinations

of them—that contributed to his success, we will review only a few of the more noteworthy ones:

- *Intelligence.* Alexander exhibited native intelligence at an early age and was regarded as having wisdom beyond his years. The Roman historian Plutarch tells how at the age of thirteen, Alexander tamed a powerful and wild horse named Bucephalus, whom no other rider had been able to tame. Speaking gently to the horse, Alexander turned it into the sun so that it could no longer see its own shadow—the source of its distress. Bucephalus accompanied Alexander on his conquests and is buried in the Indus Valley.
- *Education*. Aristotle was Alexander's private tutor until the prince was sixteen. He encouraged the young king to conquer to the east, to become a "leader" to the Greeks and treat them as family, and to become a "despot" to the Persian barbarians and treat them as animals. Aristotle went on to teach other rulers, notably Ptolemy and Cassander, but Alexander was his most influential pupil.
- *Military Genius*. Alexander inherited from his father the most powerful army in the Western world, with a strong territorial base from which to conquer Persia and beyond. Surely his successes were due in some measure to the genius of his father. But Alexander's own capacity as a general, leader, and warrior moved that army well beyond the physical and mental limitations any reasonable person would have expected. But perhaps more than any other factor it was Alexander's unrelenting will, the drive to accomplish things that had never been done, that made his achievements possible.

Hellenistic Kingdoms

Alexander's conquests and policy of cultural fusion brought a new world into existence, the Hellenistic world. Throughout this chapter we have referred to the "Greeks," but they did not use that term for themselves. During the Classical Period, Greeks called themselves Hellenes. Their culture and civilization is "Hellenic." The term Hellenistic civilization was later invented to describe the mixture of Hellenic (Greek) civilization with the pre-existing civilizations of the region Alexander conquered. Though he was inspired by Greek civilization, Alexander, as both Macedonian king and conqueror of a vast empire, was not committed to the purity of Hellenic culture. While he spread knowledge of Greek philosophy, art, architecture and other cultural products, he took a Persian wife (and several other wives in various conquered regions), adopted Persian dress and manners, and set himself up in every way as a Persian emperor, even making his subjects--even his own generals and soldiers at times--bow down in his presence. His apparent intention was to produce a government beyond the traditional Greek *polis*, an urban-based empire wherein all inhabitants participated—arguably as citizens—without regard to ethnicity. He called this conception the *cosmopolis*, from which we derive the modern term *cosmopolitan* to describe a highly diverse urban culture. The Hellenistic Greeks who came after Alexander boasted that he had created a single community, the *oikumene* or the "known world," from which we derive the word *ecumenical*.

The conquests of Alexander and a few thousand intermarriages between Macedonians and Persians were insufficient, however, to create the expansive, united, and enduring empire that Alexander sought, spread across and incorporating elements of all the civilizations of the ancient Middle East and Mediterranean. The work of fusion continued under Alexander's heirs, but it did so in a politically-divided world. The united empire did not survive beyond Alexander's early death, as a series of civil wars (called the Wars of the *Diadochi*, or "Wars of

the Successors") divided Alexander's empire into four large Hellenistic kingdoms ruled by his generals and friends:

- *Ptolemaic Egypt*. Following an initial struggle among Alexander's generals, a general named Ptolemy captured Egypt and set up rule from Alexandria, even waylaying Alexander's funeral cortege (bound for Macedonia) in order to bury the conqueror's body in an Egyptian mausoleum. Adapting Egyptian religion and government to Hellenic custom, Ptolemy both ruled as a divine pharaoh and set himself and his heirs up as the greatest patrons of Greek learning and culture in the Mediterranean. The adaptation of Egyptian religion to Ptolemaic rule and Greek custom is evidenced in a series of temples along the upper Nile, namely, Philae, Kom Ombo, Edfu, and Dendara, in which the Ptolemaic rulers are portrayed as pharaohs, the divine source of order in government and in the cosmos. Egypt was under Ptolemaic rule until it became part of the Roman Empire following the death of its last Greek queen and pharaoh, Cleopatra. The unique, rich mixture of Hellenic and Egyptian cultures that emerged—albeit dominated by Greek language and custom—is called Egyptian Hellenism.
- *Seleucid Persia*. Seleucus, another former general, took control of the Persian heartland, establishing a kingdom that stretched from the Indus to the Mediterranean. The largest by far of the successor empires, it was overextended and unstable from the beginning, and the peoples of the eastern regions began to break away almost immediately. However, the Seleucids were able to establish some measure of stability and even showed themselves to be the military rivals of Ptolemaic Egypt as the two empires competed for control of eastern Anatolia and the Levant. In the mid-second century BCE, Mithridates I of Parthia (a region of Persia) defeated the Seleucids and seized control of Persia and part of Mesopotamia, establishing the Parthian Empire. The Seleucids continued to rule from Syria, with their capital in the city of Antioch, until conquered by the Roman Empire in the mid-first century BCE. During the centuries of Seleucid rule, tens of thousands of Greeks emigrated to the western reaches of the Seleucid state—Asia Minor and Syria—often serving as soldiers or bureaucrats, or working in trade and commerce or as skilled artisans. The emigrants, many of whom were from Macedonia, formed an urban elite who dominated language and culture in the Hellenistic cities. These emigrants frequently combined with local elites, who embraced Hellenism and enjoyed the partnership and patronage of the Greco-Macedonian rulers. A variety of "Hellenisms" emerged in this region, given various titles indicating the origin of the emergent mixed cultures (e.g., Persian Hellenism, Jewish Hellenism).
- *Antigonid Greece*. Though he lost out on his bid for a larger share of the empire, another general, Antigonus Monophthalmus ("one-eyed") founded a third Hellenistic kingdom in 306 BC in much of mainland Greece and Macedonia. Several city-states remained independent, however, competing for economic and political advantage, hastening the fall of the Antigonid Kingdom and of the Greek city-states to the armies of the Roman Republic by 149 BC.
- *Attalid Anatolia*. After the death of Alexander's general Lysimachus, who had competed for rule in Macedonia as well as Thrace and Anatolia, Philetaerus (one

of Lysimachus's officers) established a dynasty centered on the city of Pergamon. This dynasty's control of western Anatolia persisted until Attalus III, facing a succession crisis and likely civil war, willed his kingdom to the Romans in 133 BCE.

Each of these kingdoms, to one extent or another, ruled over diverse peoples, who responded in a variety of ways both to the overlordship of the Hellenistic kings and to the advance of Greek culture. The advance of hellenization was thus uneven. Some of the Hellenistic rulers' subjects embraced the worldview and lifestyle of the new culture while others rejected anything offered by their Greek overlords, even fomenting large-scale revolts at times. Within any given region or people in this period, there tended to be a spectrum of hellenization, with some members of a community embracing Greek ideals and lifestyles wholesale, others rejecting hellenization outright, and most falling somewhere in the middle of the two extreme responses.

The Jews of this era offer an excellent case study in hellenization. This is, in fact, a pivotal period of Jewish history, a time when the people who adhered to the ancient Israelite religion took on new identities and formulated new components of their religious observance. Several of the works later included in the Hebrew Bible (Christian "Old Testament") were written in the Hellenistic centuries, and the term "Judaism" itself originates from this time.

Even with the sixth-century BCE restoration of the Jewish people to their ancestral homeland in Palestine (called "Judea" in this period) by the Persian ruler Cyrus the Great and the subsequent rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple, most Jews continued to live in the Diaspora ("scattering," the common term for Jewish life outside of Palestine), especially in Babylon and other major cities in the Persian Empire. Over the next few centuries, large numbers of Jews settled in other cosmopolitan centers in Egypt, the Levant, and Asia Minor. Alexandria was home to one of the largest Jewish communities in the Hellenistic period. With the advance of hellenization under the sponsorship of the Ptolemies and Seleucids, many Jews, and particularly Jewish elites, began to embrace Greek lifestyles and ideas: reading Greek philosophy, attending performances in the theater, working out (in the nude) in the gymnasium, and the like.

Though Jewish Hellenism manifested itself in different ways in different places, it had a profound influence on the historical development of Jewish identity. In Alexandria, for instance, Jewish scholars accepted the intellectual patronage of the Ptolemies and may have placed figures at the Museum. With the support of the Ptolemies, Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek, producing the so-called Septuagint (named for the legendary seventy scholars who, according to tradition, produced the very same translation of the sacred text, although they worked independently of each other). Philo, the greatest of the Alexandrian Jewish scholars, incorporated many of the ideas and intellectual strategies of the Greek philosophers into his theological approach. In the renowned Jewish academies of Babylon, Jewish scholars began to write down interpretations of the Jewish scriptures that had previously been strictly oral tradition; these texts would eventually coalesce into the Mishna and Gemara--known collectively as the Talmud.

In Judea, hellenized Jewish elites formed a ruling caste known as the Sadducees, who claimed priestly authority and controlled the temple and other key institutions. More traditional Jews objected to the Hellenism of this elite group and especially to their control of sacred sites. Many Jews followed the leadership of educated interpreters of the Jewish scriptures--the Pharisees--although others took an even harder line against what they saw as the moral degeneration of their people. The Essenes, for instance, removed themselves from society and

founded ascetic communities in remote, forbidding places (Qumran of Dead Sea Scrolls fame may have been an ascetic Essene community).

Under Ptolemaic rule in the third century, Judea was conquered by the Seleucids around 200 BCE. A couple of decades later, the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes (c.215-164 BCE) began interfering with the appointment of the Jewish high priest (ritual leader of the Jerusalem temple and effectively governor of Judea in this era), placing his hellenized allies in that key religious and political position. As part of an attempt to force hellenization on the entire region, he then pillaged the temple, placing a statue of Zeus on its altar, and outlawed circumcision and other Jewish religious practices. Angered by Antiochus's attempted destruction of Judaism, the Maccabees, a family of priests, led a successful revolt against Seleucid rule and gained political independence for Judea. The Jewish holiday of Hanukkah commemorates events that took place during this revolt. The Maccabees rededicated the temple and assumed rule of Judea as the Hasmonean Dynasty (164-63 BCE). With the weakening of the Seleucids in the late second century, the Hasmoneans conquered the regions surrounding Judea, including Galilee, Samaria, and Idumea. The Hasmonean kingdom, and especially the dynasty itself, was not always stable, and the Roman armies led by Pompey the Great easily conquered the region in 63 BCE.

Hellenistic Civilization

The cultural fusion begun by Alexander's conquests continued at an even more rapid rate in the centuries that followed his death and arguably reached their greatest height during the period of the Roman empire's dominance. The key institution of the Hellenistic world, the place where this fusion was most obvious, was the city--no longer the small, local-oriented *poleis* of the Classical period but rather giant, cosmopolitan melting pots like Alexandria, Antioch, and Pergamon, the political capitals, trade centers, and cultural powerhouses of their respective Hellenistic kingdoms. Governing from these massive cosmopolises (Alexandria had perhaps 750,000 inhabitants, Antioch around 500,000), the rulers of these kingdoms sponsored the production of art, literature, and philosophy and attracted talented, enterprising individuals (and probably shady characters as well) from all over the Hellenistic world. They even built massive monuments like the Pharos of Alexandria (a 130 meter tall lighthouse on an island in the city's harbor, sometimes called the world's first "skyscraper") and the Colossus of Rhodes (a giant statue of the god Helios erected at the entrance to that city's harbor) as symbols of their cities' greatness. It was in these massive urban centers that Greek language, culture, and thought spread throughout the Mediterranean basin. A simplified form of Greek, known as *koine*, became the *lingua franca*, or common language, of the entire Eastern Mediterranean. Every educated person, no matter their ethnic origin or mother tongue, learned of necessity to communicate in this language. The traditions of Mesopotamia, the heritage of pharaonic Egypt, and the cultures of the Minoans, the Mycenaeans, the Phoenicians—and others—were also adopted and adapted by the peoples of the Hellenistic world. A Semitic language called Aramaic emerged as a secondary *lingua franca*, particularly in the Seleucid kingdom. In fact, Aramaic remained the common language of the Levant for many centuries; Jesus of Nazareth, for instance, spoke this language, though his followers (also Aramaic speakers) composed their narratives of his life in *koine* Greek.

Centers of learning at Alexandria and elsewhere collected and preserved this heritage of cultural fusion, making it available to all participants in the Hellenistic world. While similar

institutions existed in Antioch, Pergamon, and other cities, the most important of these centers of learning was the Museum of Alexandria. This should not be confused with the modern institution whose primary purpose is preservation of significant objects or works of art. Attached to the palace of the Ptolemies, the Museum of Alexandria was essentially the world's first research university, a place where scholars, recruited from all over the Hellenistic world, were given spacious quarters and handsome stipends so they could be free to create art, literature, philosophy, and other intellectual products (the Museum was named for the nine *muses*, goddesses thought to inspire various forms of artistic and literary creation). The Museum housed the famous Library of Alexandria--home to perhaps a million scrolls--and stipended scholars were free to use, and encouraged to add to, this unparalleled collection of literary materials. The Ptolemies regularly confiscated books from travelers to Alexandria and added them to the library, and they sent book buyers throughout the Mediterranean to procure more holdings. The highest ranking scholar at the Museum was given the position of chief librarian, with charge of the organization of the collection. All told, the Museum was a place of unmatched intellectual achievement in this era.

Artists and intellectuals in the Hellenistic era continued to work on many of the same issues and motifs that had animated their Classical predecessors, although the circumstances of this era naturally shifted the focus of intellectuals. This concluding section of the chapter details some of the cultural achievements of this period.

Hellenistic Sculpture

Unlike Greek pottery which declined in quality in the Hellenistic era, this period for Greek sculpture was not one of overall decline, but represented the development of a more direct and emotional art form. The spread of Greek sculpture throughout the Hellenistic world and its contact with other artistic traditions produced a more realistic, muscular, and emotional aesthetic. The emphasis on grim reality ("warts and all") and the successful attempt to capture movement and human emotion (including outright eroticism) were both the results of improved sculptural techniques and emblematic of the times. Hellenistic art was at least partially a response to popular appeal and was no longer created solely for civic and religious purposes. Famous examples of Hellenistic sculpture include the Dying Gaul (ca. 280 BCE, now in the Capitoline Museum in Rome), Winged Victory of Samothrace (now in the Louvre, second or third century BCE), the monumental Laocöon Group (late first century BCE, housed in the Vatican Museum), and Aphrodite of Melos (first century BCE, Louvre), known through its Roman copies as Venus de Milo.

[Insert Photo *2.2TempleHaphaestus.tiff* within one page of this marker, delete this reference, and insert the caption: Figure 2.2. The Temple of Haphaestus in Athens. Author's photograph.]

Hellenistic Architecture

Greek architecture achieved new heights of execution, composition, and utility during the Hellenistic period. Just as the temple of Athena Parthenos is the example *par excellence* of Hellenic architecture, the Altar of Zeus, built in the city of Pergamon, is the great example of Hellenistic architecture. The altar was completed in the first half of the second century. The entire structure was over 115 feet wide, 109 feet deep, and about forty feet high. Shaped like a

"U" with a sixty-foot-wide staircase in the center, the top is surrounded by a colonnade, with high-relief friezes extending around the base. The most famous of the friezes depicts the *gigantomachy*, the battle between the Olympian gods led by Zeus—the forces of order—against the giants created by Gaia—the forces of chaos. Between AD 1878 and 1886, the German engineer Carl Humann began excavations of the Pergamon acropolis, including the Altar. The German government negotiated the removal of several friezes and their relocation to Berlin in order to preserve them from further deterioration, and a new museum was built to house the remnants of the structure: the *Pergamonmuseum*. Hidden away during World War II, captured by the armies of the Soviet Union following the collapse of the Third Reich's hold on the city, yet returned to Berlin in 1959, the reconstructed altar is open to public viewing. The foundations of the original structure, several parts of the walls, and portions of the friezes are still at the site of Pergamon in modern Turkey.

Greek architectural styles and artistic motifs merged in many places with existing forms. One of the best examples of this blending of styles--and indeed a prime example of Hellenistic cultural fusion--is the city of Petra. Political capital of the small Nabataean kingdom, Petra lay just outside both the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires yet was never conquered by either party. Given the appeal of Hellenism, however, the Nabataeans began to incorporate Greek forms and elements of other cultures into their art and architecture. The Nabataeans built a theater and other Greek-style structures, but their most recognizable landmarks were the gigantic monolith (single-stone) tombs built, or rather carved, for their deceased kings. Reaching as high as fifty meters, these tombs were carved directly out of the sandstone cliffs in the valley wherein Petra lies. The main architectural elements are Greek, or rather Hellenistic extensions of Greek components: Corinthian columns, triangular pediments, etc. Yet native Nabataean forms also populate these monuments--the funerary urn and the Nabataen eagle, iconographic representation of that people, adorn the tops of many monoliths. In addition, artistic motifs from other cultures also find place in the monoliths, especially the Mesopotamian crow-step, symbolic of ascent into the afterlife. As the Romans conquered Petra in the early second century CE and ruled the region for several centuries, the site also features Roman and Byzantine architectural styles and artistic programs. In short, Petra offers a model case of both the reach of hellenization and the development of architecture over the chronological span of the ancient world.

The basic elements of the Western city took shape during Hellenistic period. From Syria to Spain, the essential components and standardized layout of the Hellenistic city are ubiquitous: the oval-shaped forum with pillars from which the main street and colonnade extended (usually northward) called the *kardo*; the main crossroads, called the *capitolium*; at least one temple, usually dedicated to the city's patron god or goddess; and at least one theater. The famous Decapolis cities now in modern Jordan, Israel, and Lebanon provide excellent examples of the fundamental elements of Hellenistic urban planning. Across the Hellenistic world, including the Mediterranean, each city basically resembled the others in key respects, reinforcing the conclusion of a uniform regional culture and civilization.

Hellenistic Mathematics, Science, and Engineering

The most enduring accomplishments of the scholars housed at the Museum of Alexandria came in the fields of mathematics, science, and engineering. It was at that singular institution that Euclid wrote *The Elements*, the foundational work of geometry. Eratosthenes, for many years the chief librarian at the Library of Alexandria, calculated the circumference of the earth within a

few hundred miles of accuracy. He also essentially invented the discipline of geography, drawing a series of world maps that served as the basis of Western cartography until the late Middle Ages. Though he spent most of his life at his native Syracuse (and indeed died while defending the city during a Roman siege), Archimedes may have spent time at the Museum. Several theories and inventions are attributed to this unique scholar, including the famous Archimedes screw, a piece of equipment used to move water efficiently. Hero, another Museum scholar, invented several devices to harness natural powers, including a windwheel and a workable steam engine (the *aeolipile)*. However, since the Hellenistic world operated through the backbreaking labor of huge numbers of slaves, Hero and others lacked the frame of reference that would have allowed them to apply their theories and models to the production of work. Hence, though some of the necessary science and engineering was in place as early as the first century BCE, there was to be no industrial revolution for two more millennia.

Hellenistic Religion

Like other elements of Hellenistic culture, religion was deeply affected by cultural fusion. As Greeks were exposed to the ancient religious traditions of Egypt, Persia, and Mesopotamia, they merged and otherwise incorporated many of the gods and other religious products into their religious systems. An excellent example of this syncretism is the cult of Serapis, an amalgamation of various iconographies, mythologies, and other characteristics of existing Greek and Egyptian gods (Osiris, Apis, Hades, Demeter, Dionysus, etc.). The Ptolemies built up the power and reputation of this cult in order to unify the Greeks and Egyptians of their kingdom. The Serapeum (temple of Serapis) in Alexandria, one of the great religious centers of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, retained its powerful position until it was destroyed by a Christian mob in 391 CE.

Also in the Hellenistic period, the Greek Mystery Cults were augmented by the incorporation of other initiate religions, including the following:

- *Cult of Mithras*. This mystery cult was a Hellenistic adaptation of Persian mythology. Much of what is known of the cult is derived from the study of its art and iconography. Mithras, a Persian god, was customarily depicted as slaying a cosmic bull, depicted in a cave curiously surrounded by the stars and signs of the zodiac. Mithras is also often shown hosting a feast for the sun god on the hide of the slain bull. In yet another common scene, Mithras is shown rising up alive from the ground, with a torch in one hand and a sword or a *caduceus* (a staff with two serpents intertwined) in the other hand. Additional scenes show souls being drawn forth alive from the blood of the bull. The rituals and teachings of the cult appear centered in death: feasting on the flesh of the bull, the revivifying blood of the bull, and the return of Mithras to life, emerging from the earth. In the Roman period, the cult grew in popularity, seems to have admitted only men, and flourished in particular among the soldiers in the Roman army.
- *Cult of Isis* (see chapter 1 for the story of Isis in Egyptian mythology). From at least the early fifth century, Greeks had conflated this Egyptian goddess with Demeter, Aphrodite, and other goddesses, and her expanding mythology featured powers gleaned from these associations. The cult of Isis in the Hellenistic and Roman eras focused upon her magical power (demonstrated in her sacred narrative) both to heal bodily infirmities and to resurrect individuals and lead them to eternal life. In the Hellenistic world, and even more in the Roman period, the Cult of Isis became widely popular, bridging many distinct

cultures, and temples to Isis spread throughout the Mediterranean region. Both males (priests) and females (priestesses) administered the rituals. The cult of Isis persisted into the early Christian era and may have influenced Christian liturgy and iconography; her frequent iconographic depiction as a mother nursing the baby Horus and her reputed ability to save the soul from death are thought to parallel the image and character of the Virgin Mary.

The Mystery Cults offer a window into popular religion in a period of transition and transformation. Rather than ensuring the temporal prosperity of the community like the civic cults of the Classical era, the Hellenistic mystery cults trained their focus on otherworldly things: death, rebirth or resurrection, and life after death. They assumed the immortality of the individual soul. They involved initiation and a covenant not to reveal the rituals or teachings of the cult to the uninitiated. They typify an important aspect of religion in the Hellenistic world: the blending and adaptation of Greek, Persian, and Egyptian belief and practice. Moreover, the increasing popularity of these cults sheds some light on the social and cultural dislocation of the Hellenistic era. Shorn of their primary civic identity with the decline of the Greek *polis*, Greeks and others sought meaning and identity in institutions like Mystery Cults, which provided a sense of security, the promise of divine protection, and, perhaps most importantly, a social network of like-minded individuals.

Hellenistic Philosophy

During the Hellenistic period, new forms of philosophy came into existence. These diverged from the philosophical systems of the Classical period in vital ways. Most importantly, these philosophies came to constitute ways of life--strategies for living well--rather than focusing on abstract theories. Put another way, the ideas of these philosophical systems are inseparable from the practices of their adherents. As with Hellenistic religion, these philosophical approaches responded to the challenges and uncertainties--cultural fusion, social dislocation, etc.--of the era. Furthermore, and also like the period's religions, these philosophies reached their fullest development during the Roman imperial period. The three most important philosophical systems were the following:

- *Epicureanism*: Epicurus (341-270 BCE), an Athenian citizen, was a contemporary of Zeno the Stoic. Both philosophers were empiricists, meaning that they accepted only truths based upon sensory observations. Both sought peace of mind and had large followings. Epicurus, however, sought peace of mind by withdrawing from life, and he often taught in gardens, out of public view. Holding that there was no life beyond death, he concluded that there was no need for religion and gods. Life thus ought to consist of the prudent pursuit of pleasure and the deliberate avoidance of pain. Although Epicureans are often credited with equating "pleasure" with the phrase "eat, drink, and be merry," they really referred to the pleasure of an intellectual life, to friendship, and to a sense of shared community, particularly among the wealthier aristocracy.
- *Stoicism*: Zeno the Stoic (335-263 BCE) emigrated to Athens, probably from Phoenicia. Although influenced by Socratic philosophy, he developed his own ideas, which he taught in the public plaza and *stoa* (hence the name "stoic"). The Stoics believed in the community or brotherhood of mankind, with a shared duty one to another. The pursuit

and fulfillment of duty often involved cultivating an indifference to suffering and pain. The Stoics' emphasis upon duty and law appealed to ruling elites and was adopted widely by the Romans, who used the concept of a universal state governing the universal brotherhood of mankind as a justification for their empire.

- *Cynicism*: The archetypical Cynic was Diogenes of Sinope (412-323 BCE), a critic of Plato who taught that social and political conventions (including property, family, and *polis*) were merely hollow, artificial, and ultimately meaningless constructs, and that virtue was to be found by following the natural life without shame. Carrying his own teachings to extremes, Diogenes lived in absolute poverty and was reputed to eat, sleep, and fulfill other natural functions wherever he liked. While not all Cynics went quite so far as Diogenes in their efforts to live the virtuous, natural life, they tended to take up the ascetic life of begging and preaching, rejecting family and possessions.

To reiterate, these Hellenistic philosophical systems were less and less interested in discussing the potential virtues of forms of government or in defending the *polis* and the state, and were increasingly interested in revealing the best way to live and in finding happiness and personal fulfillment. This shift in concern reflected the changing sociopolitical realities of the Hellenistic world.

Conclusion

While it may be tempting to pass over the Hellenistic era as a placeholder between Classical Greece and the Roman Empire, this period is of vital importance and interest in its own right. Again, this era created the political circumstances wherein Greek culture could infiltrate and merge with the traditions of other civilizations. The Hellenistic rulers' sponsorship of this amalgamated culture created space wherein it could continue to develop and expand. When the armies of Rome swept across the eastern Mediterranean, consuming what remained of the once-proud successor kingdoms, Hellenistic culture was still vital, entrenched, and poised to survive. Perhaps the most flexible and adaptable of the ancient conquerors, the Romans not only permitted but actively embraced and created circumstances for the continued development of Hellenistic culture. They also adopted some Hellenistic modes of government and social organization. In sum, the Romans were the long-term beneficiaries of the accomplishments of the Hellenistic world.

CHAPTER 4

Rome: Kingdom and Empire

> *Venus*: "Hast thou [Jove] not given us thy covenant that hence the Romans, when the rolling years have come full cycle, shall arise to power from Troy's regenerate seed and rule supreme—the unresisted lords of land and sea?"
>
> —Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 1

Introduction

While Greece is widely known for its contributions to Western civilization in the arts, literature, drama, and philosophy, Rome is generally known for its enduring innovations in law, government, administration, and engineering. The Romans' focus on law and government arose from their obsession with liberty, which stood in contrast with the Athenian fixation on equality—a concept difficult to define, let alone implement in government and society. The tension between the two concepts of liberty and equality is evident in the modern Western world. The American Declaration of Independence—arguably a justification for revolution and not an act of law—states that all men are created equal but does not explore the nature of this equality in an inherently unequal world. The French Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen and the American Bill of Rights do not speak to equalities, but instead define *liberties* (i.e., specific rights guaranteed in law). The French Declaration couches equality within the concept of liberty or freedom, noting, "Men are born *free* and remain *free* and *equal in rights*." In the debate between elusive equality and the more enforceable concept of liberty guaranteed through law, the pragmatic Romans went with liberty. Thus the Western world is, in a very real sense, Roman. In fact, in terms of temperament, worldview, and self-identity, the governments and administrations of modern western Europe and the United States in particular are more Roman and less Greek. In this chapter we will trace the life span of the Roman state, from kingdom, to Republic, and then to Empire, with a view toward understanding Roman government and administration.

Founding of Rome

The Roman people, like most other peoples past and present, ascribed to founding myths. The legendary founding of Rome by two brothers, Romulus and Remus, is perhaps the most well-known among such stories. An extension of that myth claims that Aeneas, a Trojan prince who had escaped the destruction of Troy at the conclusion of the Trojan War, founded the Latin people from whom Romulus and Remus sprang. A third founding legend involved the kidnapping of the Sabine daughters, whom the men of Rome took as wives and who became their city's founding generation. Because the elements of each founding myth reflect essential Roman values and Roman self-conceptualization, they merit a brief retelling as an introduction to Roman civilization. This section will deal with the Romulus and Sabine women stories, and a later section will treat the Aeneas tale.

Romulus and Remus

Twin brothers, named Romulus and Remus, founded the city of Rome, according to legend. According to one version of the story, they were the children of a mortal mother and Mars, the god of war. A second version makes Hercules the father. No matter their parentage, Romulus and Remus were regarded as royalty, or even as demigods.

The story goes that their mother, Rhea Silvia, was forced by her uncle Amulius, killer of her father and brothers, to become a vestal virgin, sworn on pain of death to perpetual chastity. When she became pregnant and gave birth to twins, her enraged uncle seized the babies and condemned them to death by drowning in the Tiber River. A shepherd, charged with drowning the twins, had compassion upon them, built reed baskets, and set them afloat down the river. The god Tiberinus controlled the river and caused the baskets to catch on the exposed roots of a fig tree, and the infants miraculously escaped to land. The sequence of miracles continued when the children were thereafter discovered by a she-wolf, who suckled them. They were then adopted by another shepherd, who raised them among the seven hills of what became the city of Rome. Having grown to manhood, they agreed to establish their own city. They disagreed, however, over which of the seven hills should be used, and, in the ensuing fight, Romulus killed Remus and then built what would become Rome.

Rape of the Sabine Women

Another founding legend reports that Romulus sought wives for his mostly male followers and, to that end, sought negotiation with the leader of a neighboring people, the Sabines. Initially rebuffed, Romulus invited the Sabines to a banquet in honor of the god Neptune. At a signal from Romulus, the Roman men abducted the Sabine daughters. The term "rape" in this context is derived from the Latin *raptio* (to abduct, or carry away). Livy, a Roman historian who recorded the legend many centuries later, is careful to note that there was no sexual assault. Instead, emphasizing the honorable intentions of the Roman men, he reported that Romulus offered each daughter free choice to marry, with guarantees that they would receive property and civic rights in exchange for an honorable marriage and that their children would be born free. The daughters chose marriage. Subsequently, the outraged king of the Sabines, Titus Tatius, invaded Rome and joined battle with the Roman abductors. In a famous description that has inspired important works of art, music, and theater through the centuries, Livy reported that:

> With loosened hair and rent garments [the Roman wives] braved the flying spears and thrust their way in a body between the embattled armies. They parted the angry combatants; they besought their fathers on the one side, their husbands on their other, to spare themselves the curse of sedding kindred blood. "We are mothers now," they cried; "our children are your sons--your grandsons: do not put on them the stain of parricide. If our marriage--if the relationship between you--is hateful to you, turn your anger against *us*. *We* are the cause of strife; on our account our husbands and fathers lie wounded or dead, and we would rather die ourselves than live on either widowed or orphaned" (45-46).

The courage of the women reconciled the two peoples, and both played a role in building the community. The legend explains how Rome's self-identity was based upon the absorption and assimilation of nearby peoples.

Although these two myths are legendary, they reveal how the Romans saw themselves as a people and as historical actors. Among other key elements of the Roman worldview, these stories reveal the following:

- *Survival:* The Romans saw themselves as what we might today call "survivors." They faced hardship, and with the help of the gods and of nature, overcame it. The odds were stacked against Rome from its founding, but Roman character prevailed over mere bad fortune or unfavorable circumstance.
- *Pragmatism:* Romans saw themselves as eminent problem solvers. Unlike the Greeks, they did not tend to theorize but rather tackled issues from a practical standpoint. As a result, Rome arguably did not produce philosophers of the same stature as the Greeks did, but they had far more success than the Greeks at tasks--like conquering, governing, and building infrastructure--that required a practical approach. Even elite, cosmopolitan Romans tended to celebrate the simplicity and pragmatism of their ancestors and the agricultural origins of their community.
- *Character:* More will be said about essential qualities of Roman character later in this chapter. At present, we should note that the Romans saw themselves as reasonable and honest, yet direct, as evidenced in the legend of the rape of the Sabine women.
- *Stoicism:* Romans embraced stoicism, the philosophy taught by Zeno the Stoic (see chapter 6), though with some modification from its Hellenistic form. Stoicism manifested itself particularly in the Roman emphasis on self-sacrifice, endurance, obedience to law, and service to the state.

Regnum Romanum (753–509 BCE)

The peoples who settled Rome were, like most peoples of the Mediterranean region, immigrants. The ancestors of Rome likely came from the area of the Danube River in central or south-central Europe, between 1200 and 1000 BC. They settled in the region of Italy called *Latium*, from which the word *Latin* is derived. The plain of Latium lies between two other plains in western Italy--Etruria (home to the Etruscans) to the north and Campania to the south--and the peoples of these other regions interacted with and influenced Rome in profound ways. Roman historians set the date for the founding of the city of Rome at 753 BCE, and this date has proven reasonable. The archaeological record shows early settlements in the vicinity of Rome in the eighth century BCE. Legend holds that Rome was governed in its pre-republican period by seven kings, and historical and archaeological sources provide some evidence of archaic monarchy. According to legend, the rulers of the Kingdom of Rome (Latin, *Regnum Romanum*) were Etruscans. While less is known about the Etruscans than historians would like, we do know that they were more sophisticated in burial practices and art, and more advanced militarily, than the more recent Roman immigrants. There is debate over whether or not the Etruscans merely influenced Roman development or whether Roman culture was created through a fusion with Etruscan culture. According to Roman historians, Etruscan rule ended with Tarquinius Superbus (called Tarquin the Proud, r. 535–509), an event that marked the founding of the Roman Republic (see below).

Many of the governmental structures traditionally ascribed to the Regnum Romanum persisted for several centuries after the overthrow of the kings, so it is important to understand how the royal government functioned. Though the king was Etruscan, he partnered with elite

Roman advisors who came to form a body called the Senate. Perhaps most importantly, the king was vested with *imperium* (Latin, "power to command"), making him commander in chief, charged with the maintenance of law and order internally and of external defense; essentially, *imperium* constituted supreme executive power. The king was also the *pontifex* (Latin, "bridge builder"), the supreme religious authority in charge of all relationships between humans and the gods. He was, moreover, the *iudex* (Latin, "judge"), with authority to judge in civil and in criminal matters. The Senate was primarily a consultative body and did not propose law—that is, it did not legislate. This would remain the case after the establishment of the Republic. Once the king submitted legislation or made a treaty, however, the Senate could debate and ratify it. The Regnum period may also have witnessed the formation of the Centuriate Assembly (*comitia centuriata*), so-named because each voting group (or "assembly") consisted of one hundred citizens. The Centuriate Assembly was granted legislative powers to declare war and elect Roman magistrates, the officials who assisted the king in executive duties. Magistrates came from the patrician class only, were elected in pairs, and served one-year terms. Although the Centuriate Assembly worked by direct vote, it functioned mainly to legitimize the supremacy of the patrician class and often merely ratified the decisions and actions of the king. By contrast, the Senate had greater autonomy and oversight, though it was technically only an advisory body.

As Roman government took shape during the monarchy, Roman society also evolved, dividing itself into two main groups by the end of the kingdom: 1) the aristocratic patricians (from Latin *patricius*, or "well-fathered"), and 2) the plebs, or plebeians, freemen engaged primarily in agriculture at that time. The most important distinction between the two groups, other than comparative wealth, was the restriction on plebeians holding positions in the government; all such posts were reserved for patricians. This basic social division would remain fundamental to Roman society through most of Roman history, although the makeup of and divisions within each of the two groups changed significantly over time. As the Regnum Romanum expanded through both war and diplomacy, the Romans began to face a problem that would bedevil them in later centuries: what to do with conquered or assimilated peoples. The plebeian class itself--or at least many of the families who belonged to it--may have originated out of an attempt to offer citizenship with lesser status to assimilated peoples. Contact and conflict with surrounding peoples also necessitated the building of the city's first defensive walls. This period may have witnessed the institution of the census, overseen by officials called *censors*. This remained a vital government institution throughout the Republic, a periodic method of keeping track of the citizens' status and thus determining the makeup of bodies like the Centuriate Assembly.

The overthrow of the monarchy was a signal moment in the history of Rome. The events and circumstances of this political transition were kept alive in the Roman mind through the recounting of legends, much as Americans tell myth-shrouded stories about the Boston Tea Party or Washington's crossing of the Delaware River. The most important of these legends was the story of the "Rape of Lucretia." According to the version written by the later Roman historian Livy, life had become nearly unbearable under the last king, Tarquin the Proud, who maintained authority through the intimidation of patrician families. The Romans became determined to overthrow the monarchy when Tarquin's son Sextus raped (this time meaning "sexually assaulted") a Roman matron named Lucretia, the wife of a notable patrician named Collatinus and the daughter of Spurius Lucretius, the prefect of Rome. Lucretia was the very model of a Roman woman--chaste and hard-working, the preserver of her family's honor or reputation. The story also casts her as the embodiment of Rome itself, a figure in whom all of the fundamental

Roman values were ensconced. Thus, figuratively speaking, Sextus violated the entire Roman people when he raped her. After revealing the rape to her husband and father, Lucretia made them swear to seek vengeance against Sextus and his father the king. In Livy's words, she then "drew a knife from under her robe, drove it into her heart, and fell forward, dead" (102). At the conclusion of the emotional scene, Lucius Junius Brutus, the friend of Collatinus and eventual leader of the rebellion against the monarchy, took the suicidal dagger and made an oath:

> By this girl's blood--none more chaste till a tyrant wronged her--and by the the gods, I swear that with sword and fire, and whatever else can lend strength to my arm, I will pursue Lucius Tarquinius the Proud, his wicked wife, and all his children, and never again will I let them or any other man be King in Rome (102).

Brutus organized a revolution and took control of Rome while the king was absent on a military campaign. He and Collatinus replaced the king as *consuls*, coexecutives ruling for a term of one year, inaugurating the establishment of the Roman Republic.

The story of the rape of Lucretia offered a lesson in values and behavior to the Romans who told and retold it for generations. The story was above all a lesson in the following principles:

- *Abhorrence of monarchy*: The prince in the story violates Lucretia, who, as mentioned, was the embodiment of Rome itself. The message of the tale, then, was clear: kings disrespect and exploit Rome, stripping it of its honor and worth. After the overthrow of the monarchy, Romans refused to allow anything approaching a royal dynasty for five centuries. The assassination of Julius Caesar is perhaps the most famous incident that was inspired by anti-monarchic sentiment.
- *Honor*: Though it was most potent among the patricians, and though its connotations evolved over time, the concept of honor was perhaps the most essential Roman value through the entire ancient period. Honor was the sum total of one's reputation and was the social currency in which all Romans, though patricians more than others, dealt. A Roman gained honor by accomplishing great deeds, particularly on the battlefield or in the service of Rome and her people. Honor was hereditary; the deeds of Roman ancestors bestowed honor on their descendants, even over many generations. Thus some Romans (i.e., the patricians) started life with much more honor, and correspondingly greater social and political advantage, than other Romans. This value is at the heart of the story of Lucretia. She becomes the object of the prince's lust because she is the most honorable of women; not only does she belong to an elite patrician family, but she tends to her wifely duties while other women are neglecting them. When she rebuffs the prince's sexual advances, it is his threat to her family's honor that causes her to relent (he threatens to kill her and one of her male slaves and to claim that he caught them in a sexual act; this would have scandalized and destroyed the honor of her husband and father). In spite of her husband and father telling her that she is not at fault for the rape, she kills herself to preserve the very concept of honor; just before she plunges the knife into her breast, she declares, "As for me, I am innocent of fault, but I will take my punishment. Never shall Lucretia provide a precedent for unchaste women to escape what they deserve" (102). She even forces her male relatives to swear an oath that they will take revenge on the prince and king in order to restore the family's honor. We will have more to say about

honor later in the chapter, but this story provides an excellent first introduction to the concept.

Roman Republic (509–31 BCE)

The Roman *res publica* (literally "public thing") persisted for nearly five centuries as Rome's system of governmental and social organization, and for centuries beyond its destruction in the minds of the Roman people. This system, with honor, Stoicism, and patrician privilege at its ideological core, captured the imagination not only of the Romans and those influenced by the Romans over the centuries, but also of political philosophers and practitioners in more recent times, including the American founding fathers. Though a comprehensive overview of political and social development in the republican era would take us beyond the intended scope of this textbook, it seems necessary to explain some of the most essential features of the *res publica*. These include the following:

The Conflict of Orders

Fundamental to the republic was the inequality between patricians and plebeians. This inequality extended beyond differences in wealth and political power. In the Roman republican view, patricians had more honor--due to their own and their ancestors' accomplishments--and were thus intrinsically better people. This meant that the patricians were viewed as worthy of holding the lion's share of the wealth and political power, and indeed the governmental structures were skewed to ensure that this would always be the case.

This fundamental inequality did not mean that plebeians were without recourse to law or that they were unable to extract political and social concessions from the patricians. In fact, one of the most important trends in the political history of the early Republic was the successful effort on the part of the plebeians to obtain greater power, even some measure of political (though not social or economic) equality with the patricians. This took a great deal of effort and creativity over several centuries to achieve, but it ultimately transformed the republican system into one of shared governance. The history of the "conflict of the orders," a label attached to the period between 494 and 287 BCE, included the following:

- In 494 BCE, plebeians soldiers protested lack of inclusion in government by refusing to fight in a conflict against one of Rome's neighbors. In response, the patricians recognized the legitimacy of a plebeian assembly known as the *concilium plebis*. Though its legislative powers were initially limited to plebeian matters, this assembly eventually came to constitute the premier Roman legislative body by the late Republic.
- In 445 BCE, the office of tribune, heretofore the informal leader of the *concilium plebis*, was given official status as a Roman magistrate, though the election of tribune was initially controlled by the patricians. Over the next century and a half, however, the powers of the tribune increased; like the consuls, tribunes held *imperium*, or the power to issue executive orders that had the force of law, and they could veto laws made by the patrician-dominated assemblies or decrees of the consuls.
- In the early fourth century BCE, Rome fought another series of wars with neighboring tribes. The plebeians bore the hardships of battle while, at least from their perspective, the patricians derived principal benefit. In 367 BCE, after a period of near anarchy and under plebeian pressure, the senators ratified the Licinio-Sextian Law (named for the two tribunes who championed it) which gave more substantial and deeper concessions to the

plebeians. The greatest of these was the stipulation that one of two annually-elected consuls, the chief magistrates of the Republic, would be a plebeian. However, this was not always followed in practice, and the patricians quickly cut off plebeian access to other magistrate positions--the praetor and the aedile--and transferred some consular power to these other offices.

- The final event in the period of the "Conflict of the orders" era was the passage of the *Lex Hortensia* in 287 BCE. This was prompted by another plebeian secession from the city, which crisis prompted the appointment of a plebeian dictator, Quintus Hortensius. Hortensius issued a law decreeing that laws passed by the *concilium plebis* were binding on all Romans, both patrician and plebeian. Since the tribunes presided over the *concilium plebis*, the power of that office increased in corresponding fashion.

The Government of the *Res publica*

With the conclusion of the conflict of orders, the government of the Roman Republic took the shape it would hold for nearly two centuries. This was a government of checks and balances--of legislative bodies who elected and gave oversight to magistrates who performed executive and judicial functions. Given Rome's abhorrence of monarchy, the system carefully limited the potential of any one man to assume outsized authority, unless Rome faced an existential threat, in which case the Republic contained a fail-safe--a temporary dictatorship and a system of emergency martial law.

In spite of this rejection of monarchy, the Republic retained several features of the government that had existed during that earlier period, most notably the Senate. This august body was made up of the most honorable patricians--those who had risen to one of the executive/judicial magistrate positions became Senators for life; the higher the position one achieved, the greater honor and voice one had within the Senate itself. Having ancestors who had risen to Senatorial rank was the surest ticket to magisterial election and membership in the Senate. Technically, the Senate was limited to advisory functions--advising both the magistrates and the legislative assemblies. However, the honor of this council was such that the assemblies, and often the magistrates, would simply wait for the Senate to pronounce on a matter and then act on its advice. Since magistrate positions were almost all limited to one-year, non-renewable terms, the long-term goal of many of the patricians seeking these positions was lifelong membership in the Senate. The real decision-making of the Republic, in other words, took place largely in the Senate. So important was the Senate to Rome that the Republic identified itself with the acronym SPQR (Senatus populusque Romanum, or "the Senate and people of Rome").

Legislative functions were exercised by the following three assemblies:

- *Comitia tributa* or "Tribal Assembly"*:* The word *tribe* in this case does not refer to extended blood relations. Instead, the Romans used the term to refer to administrative districts. A citizen belonged to a tribe according to where they lived. The areas outside of Rome were divided into thirty-one tribes, whereas the city of Rome itself had four tribes, to which every citizen-inhabitant belonged. Tribes comprised members of both social classes. However, since the tribes cast votes as a whole and not as individuals, and since the Patricians often exercised leadership of the tribal assemblies, the electoral power of the patricians among the tribes was effectively secure.
- *Comitia centuriata* or "Centuriate Assembly"*:* Membership in the Centuriate Assembly was based upon wealth, as determined by census conducted by the censors. Location, or tribe, was not considered for membership in this body. The population and territory of

Rome grew during the early Republic 193 centuries were eventually formed. Of the 193 centuries, nearly one hundred consisted mainly of patricians, comprising the wealthiest 10 percent of Roman citizenry. The remaining 90 percent of the citizenry were divided into the other ninety-three centuries. Given the numerical superiority of the 100 centuries, and the fact that each assembly cast one vote, patricians exercised an effective domination of this assembly as well during the early Republic.

- *Concilium plebis*: The other assembly was the aforementioned Plebeian Council, whose power increased over the third and second centuries BCE. Given its plebeian membership and legacy as a body of protest--and given that it was presided over by tribunes--this was the legislative assembly least likely to be manipulated or cowed into submission by the Senate or by the patrician magistrates.

The three assemblies could all issue laws, and the potential for competitive or contradictory legislation created some tension between them. However, their specific responsibilities were determined by tradition, and for most of the Republican period they tended to legislate on different issues. By the last century or so of the Republic, the *concilium plebis* outstripped the other assemblies in power, and the others were relegated mostly to ceremonial functions. In some ways, the *concilium plebis* came to rival even the Senate, in that politicians seeking power could pursue the support of the plebeian council--a much more volatile and impetuous body than the Senate--rather than seeking approval of the Senate, which was far more conservative and slower to act. The difference between these two institutions was key to the transformative conflicts of the late Republic.

Executive and military powers--as well as some judicial and religious responsibilities--were placed in the hands of Roman magistrates. As mentioned, some of these magistrate offices--the tribune and the plebeian aedile--originated with the compromises that came out of the conflict of orders and were open only to plebeians (or in some cases to patricians who could show plebeian ancestry). Most magistrate positions, however, were the exclusive access of patricians. The system of patrician magistrate offices was called the *cursus honorum*--the latter word signifying both the offices and the honor that accrued to those who rose successfully to those positions. As mentioned, not least among these honors was a permanent place in the Roman Senate. Through most of the existence of the Republic, patrician men placed the obtaining of these offices above all other concerns, for therein lay the greatest opportunity of increasing one's honor.

Three governing principles should be kept in mind during the following review of magistrates and offices. The first is *annuality*—except for the censorship, all officers were elected for one-year terms. The second is *collegiality*—the officers served as colleagues in many cases, working as a group rather than as a strict hierarchy. The third is *timocracy* (rule of the wealthy)--most offices were confined to wealthy patricians because the projects pursued by sitting magistrates were largely funded by the magistrates themselves out of their own personal fortunes. While Romans did tax their own citizens, they did so at almost absurdly low levels, considering it honorable for wealthy patricians to foot most of the bill for the raising of armies, the building of temples, roads, and bridges, and the general upkeep and improvement of the Republic. As we will see later in the chapter, the conquest of lands outside Rome changed the rules and incentives of executive governance, for conquered peoples could be enslaved or taxed at high levels, thus primarily enriching the magistrates who led and managed the conquests. The principal magistrates of the Republic were as follows:

- *Consul:* There were two consuls elected for one-year terms. Both the partnership and the limited term of office were intended to check the possibility of one man accruing monarchic powers. In practical terms, the shared power meant at times that one consul could concentrate on the military and foreign affairs while the other attended to domestic concerns, but the power arrangements did not always work out this way. It seems to have been more common for one consul to be more active and pursue more ambitious policies than the other. The consuls convened the legislative assemblies (apart from the *concilium plebis*) when necessary. Most importantly, they exercised *imperium*, acting essentially as co-commanders in chief of the army and co-executives of the civic government.
- *Praetor:* This office was created in 366 BCE to take over duties that belonged formerly to the consuls (and thus to keep power away from plebeians who had gained access to that office). There were at least two praetors elected each year, though this was increased--eventually to sixteen by Julius Caesar--as praetors were given responsibility over each area Rome conquered. Praetors held *imperium*, albeit subject to consular veto, and acted as both military and judicial officers. They were not judges as such, but saw to it that the courts operated according to rules of law and procedure. Significantly, upon election, they each customarily issued a praetor's edict. Over the centuries, these edicts functioned like modern common law, becoming the basis for Roman law.
- *Quaestor:* There were at least two quaestors during the Republic, though the number reached as high as twenty in the late Republic. This was the entry-level position in the *cursus honorum*, though admission to the office did include permanent entry into the Senate. Quaestors' primary responsibility was the oversight of the Republic's finances. They collected taxes and fines from citizens and tribute from vassal states. They also gave out government contracts for public works of various kinds, such as contracts for waterworks and roads. The significance of granting contracts to friends and family should not be overlooked in the context of Roman patronage.
- *Tribune:* There were ten tribunes elected from among the plebeians, although patricians who had plebeian heritage (as most did at least tenuously) were eligible for the office as well. Holding *imperium*, the tribunes looked out for the interests of the plebeians, principally through the exercise of veto power. One or more tribunes sat outside the Senate chambers, and if the senatorial discussion took a direction that they felt was contrary to the interests of the common people, they would shout "Veto!" meaning "I forbid" or "I object in the name of the people." The office was not part of the *cursus honorum* and did not include entry to the Senate, although some viewed it as an alternate, and potentially quicker, path to political power.
- *Aedile:* Aediles served as city officials, charged with maintaining public buildings and streets—and by extension, the sewers—and providing for public entertainment, which became very important over time. While the office of *curule aedile* (limited to patricians) was included in the *cursus honorum*, it was not mandatory that a patrician hold this before seeking higher honors. Seeking this office did, however, demonstrate a patrician's commitment to stoic service and thus increased honor. There were also plebeian aediles charged with similar responsibilities, though that office did not carry the same honor or prestige.
- *Censor:* There were two censors, elected every five years. They had two primary responsibilities. First, they were charged with maintaining public morality by "censoring." Second, they took a public census every five years. The census was used to

assign each citizen, on the basis of wealth, into one of 193 "centuries" in the *comitia centuriata*, the legislative assembly who elected the consul. Though the office was not part of the *cursus honorum*, it still endowed the holder with a great deal of honor. Most elected censors were former consuls.

- *Dictator:* Since the Romans abhorred any arrangement that gave one man too much power, the office of dictator was employed only during grave emergencies (an impending attack on the city itself, for example). Roman dictators ruled by decree without consultation or voting (note the term *dictate* in the title *dictator*). Dictators served only during the crisis, usually about six months' time, after which time they would hand power back to the Republic. Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus (519–430) was a model dictator, one of the heroes of the early Republic, and his story was told by Romans in the same fashion that Americans recount experiences of their founding fathers. According to the narrative, Cincinnatus, a former consul, had been fined on account of his son's treason, and his subsequent impoverishment forced him to live out the balance of his life as a simple farmer. Cincinnatus did not complain and accepted the punishment of his Republic with equanimity and customary stoicism, exemplifying Roman virtues. War subsequently came, and the reigning consul's army suffered a crushing defeat, leaving the city of Rome nearly defenseless. The Senate called upon Cincinnatus and made him dictator. Leaving his farm to take up the position, Cincinnatus organized the Roman defense and personally led the infantry into battle in 458 BC. After achieving victory, he resigned almost immediately (having served only fifteen days of his six month term), returning power to the Senate instead of keeping it for himself. Cincinnatus did this a second time, during a famine (439 BC), in order to address an alleged conspiracy led by Spurius Maelius, who was charged with seeking to make himself King. Cincinnatus was a model Roman citizen/leader and later served as an example to American revolutionary George Washington, who also relinquished command voluntarily and organized the famous Order of the Cincinnati in the ancient dictator's honor. Of course, not all Roman dictators were so stoic and selfless as Cincinnatus, and, as described below, the position was exploited severely by late Republic figures like Sulla and Julius Caesar.
- *Promagistrates*: With the expansion of Rome, first throughout the Italian Peninsula and later through much of the Mediterranean, it became necessary to appoint officials with executive, magisterial power over the conquered regions. After all, the two consuls could not be everywhere in the expanding lands controlled by the Republic. This need for provincial governors was the reason for the expansion of the office of praetor, for instance--from two praetors in the early Republic to as many as sixteen in the late Republic. However, even this expansion of the *cursus honorum* did not meet the demand for magistrates. The Romans eventually settled on a system whereby certain Romans, mostly patricians, would be appointed as *promagistrates*, placeholders who held the authority of a magistrate office without actually holding the office. The most important of these office was that of *proconsul*, usually bestowed on reigning consuls after their year of service. Essentially, the consul's term of service was extended for one year, during which time he served as governor of a particularly important province, as determined by the Senate. The *proconsul* (and, for that matter, the *propraetor*) continued to hold *imperium*, which gave him the authority to maintain command of a Roman army. Some *proconsuls* in the late Republic manipulated the Senate to extend their terms beyond one year so that they could continue to prosecute ongoing conquests. Julius Caesar and his

rival Pompey the Great, for instance, both served as proconsuls for many years beyond their consulships, conquering vast territories (Caesar in Gaul, Pompey in Asia Minor and the Levant) while holding the office.

- *Pontifex maximus* and the priestly colleges: As was the case in the Greek *poleis*, proper observance of religion was a function of the Roman government. Magistrates had responsibility to oversee the worship of (i.e., sacrifices to) the city gods and were tasked with the organization of major religious festivals. The day-to-day observance of the civic religion was largely the responsibility of organizations known as priestly colleges. There were four of these, each with responsibility for one aspect of religious observance. The most prestigious and important of these was the College of Pontiffs (Latin "bridge-builders," connoting those who build bridges between gods and humans). This organization included the highest ranking female priestesses in Rome: the Vestal Virgins who tended to the city hearth, sacred site of the goddess Vesta, and who swore a vow of chastity for the required thirty-year term of service. The head of the College of Pontiffs and the supreme religious authority in Rome was the *pontifex maximus*. This office dates to the beginning of the Republic, when it was created to house the religious authority previously belonging to the king. The *pontifex maximus* held both religious and political authority and was capable of using his elevated position to push for a particular political course of action. It was the *pontifex maximus* Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica, for instance, who flouted consular authority and led a mob of Senators to murder Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BCE (see below). The reigning *pontifex maximus* could hold magistrate positions, including consul, while simultaneously serving in the priestly position. Although not a magistrate office, and certainly not a component of the *cursus honorum*, the office did confer tremendous honor, power, and wealth on its recipient. Election to *pontifex maximus* in 63 BCE saved Julius Caesar from bankruptcy and helped enable him to reach the heights he achieved later in his political career. When Augustus Caesar transformed the Republic into an increasingly autocratic empire, he carefully reserved this office for himself, and he used priestly authority to push for many of his reforms and political programs.

Roman Society in the Republican Period

The Roman Republic was not merely a system of government and laws. Much as the concept of *poleis* informed both social organization and culture, both public and private life in classical Greece, so did the conceptual framework of Republic comprise all of these things in ancient Rome. Particularly important to the way the Romans conceived of their Republic was the social framework into which every Roman inhabitant fit. We have already discussed some aspects of this--specifically the social division between patricians and plebeians. But there were basic institutions that lay even at the root of that fundamental division.

The most basic social institution in ancient Rome was the *familia*. This Latin word is, of course, the root of the English word "family" and corresponding words in other European languages. However, one should caution against assuming that the concept of the family or family structures have remained consistent over time. The Roman *familia* was usually a larger unit, both horizontally and vertically, than the modern family; it often encompassed multiple generations of blood relations as well as slaves and other dependents. The head of the *familia* was the *pater familias*; this idiomatic term does not translate well into English, but it is perhaps

best conceived of as "alpha male." The *pater familias* had power of life and death over his heirs and his slaves, though perhaps not over his wife, who might belong to the *pater familias* of her original *familia*. Perhaps the most important responsibility of a *pater familias* was choosing his heir, so he needed to choose wisely, perhaps passing over his sons if he felt that another relation (or perhaps a client who was not related by blood--see below) was more capable. The *familia* was closed connected to the *domus*: the house or physical dwelling space of the *familia*. Within the physical space of the *domus* and the relational space of the *familia*, the laws of the Republic gave way to the jurisdiction of the *pater familias*, whose word was law. There are several examples in Roman history of a *pater familias* executing his own family members. Of course, there was pressure to conform with Roman values even within the *familia*, but the potential did exist for the *pater familias* to take extreme measures. In a way, the *familia*/*domus* was a microcosm of the Republic itself, with the *pater familias* serving as the equivalent of the *consul*, or perhaps in some circumstances like a *dictator*.

In addition to the basic unit of the *familia*, most Romans also identified strongly with two larger social units: the *gens* and the *tribus*. The *gens* (usually translated as clan) was a collection of people who traced their ancestry back to the same ancestor. For reasons that should now be apparent, this conception was particularly important for patricians, the deeds of whose ancestors bestowed honor over many generations. Simply belonging to a powerful, honorable *gens* was a common prerequisite for political advancement in the Republic. As discussed above, the *tribus* was a geographic, administrative division of the Republic. Most Roman male names were connected to the three fundamental social institutions: *familia*, *gens*, and *tribus*. The *praenomen* or first name was given by the parents and used primarily in the private space of the *domus*. The *nomen* (middle in the name sequence) was taken from the *gens* and the *cognomen* from the *tribus*. Thus the full name of Julius Caesar was Caius Julius Caesar. Caius (pronounced "Gaius") was given by his parents. Julius was the *gens* name; he was part of the Julii *gens*. Caesar was the name of his *tribus*, though of course it became primarily associated with him on account of his fame. Roman women were known primarily by a single name; by default, this was the feminine form of the *gens* name, even if multiple girls were born the same parents. Thus if Caius Julius Caesar had sired five daughters, they would all have been called Julia.

A final social institution that should be explained is the Roman system of patronage. Throughout the Republican era, powerful Roman men (i.e., the patrons) entered into binding relationships with clients who were beneath them in status and honor. The patron oversaw his clients' social and political advancement and assisted them legally and, to some extent, financially. In return for this sponsorship, the client owed his patron loyalty and obedience in whatever capacity the patron required. The patron could thus count on his clients' support and vote in the Senate or the Assemblies. Clients delivered messages, ran errands, and even acted as henchmen or enforcers in some cases. Both parties benefited from the mutual obligations inherent in this relationship. The client's honor and prospects were enhanced through his association with a powerful, honorable patron, and he found safety in the patron's legal and financial sponsorship. If the patron was a *pater familias* of a powerful *familia*, he could even choose to adopt and pass on his inheritance and position to one of his clients if he did not otherwise have a suitable heir. The benefits for the patron extended far beyond procuring loyal minions; sponsorship of a large number of patrons was one of the surest paths to great honor in the Roman Republic. While the patron-client relationship was not strictly regulated by Roman law, it was such a vital component of the social system and the culture of the Republic that cultural norms and social pressures ensured the proper behavior of both patrons and clients. In

book six of Virgil's *Aeneid*, for instance, the author insists that violating this relationship will land the guilty party in the fires of Tartarus, essentially the Roman equivalent of Hell. This system was, moreover, intertwined with the political processes of the Republic. Indeed, one cannot understand Roman political figures without comprehending the patron-client relationships of which they were part. Every debate in the Senate, every vote in the Assemblies, and every decree issued by a magistrate involved calculations about support and loyalty that could be mustered through patronage networks.

While this section on the government and society of the Republic has been somewhat lengthy and detailed, knowledge of key Republican institutions is a necessary prerequisite to the exploration of the major historical developments of this period. The actions of the major figures of the late Republic in particular can only be understood when one comprehends the stakes for which they were competing. These include not only powerful positions in the government, but also honor and stoic values.

Territorial Expansion in the Republican Era

When asked to name a characteristic of ancient Rome, modern individuals are likely to note that Rome had a large empire. While this was true for Rome in the imperial period, it was certainly not the case for much of the period of the Republic. Even though it is perhaps the most important trend in the history of Rome, territorial expansion was gradual and intermittent. Rome spent several centuries fighting wars and acquiring territory in the Italian Peninsula before she ever set her sights on lands and resources outside of Italy. These wars of the fifth through third centuries BCE were vitally important, for they forced Rome to develop the military capacities, often by borrowing strategies and tactics from her enemies, that would produce much grander conquests later in her history. Particularly important in this regard were the sequence of wars fought against the Samnite peoples of the Apennine Mountains in the late fourth and early third centuries BCE. Like other city-states in the Mediterranean, Rome relied on the hoplite phalanx, a poor formation to use in mountainous, uneven terrain. After suffering serious defeats and nearly losing much of the coastal territory they had gained through earlier wars and diplomacy, Rome abandoned the hoplite phalanx in favor of the Samnites' manipular formation, which gave greater autonomy to each soldier and greater flexibility to the Roman army. Thus armed and organized, Rome went on to defeat the Samnites, who were forced to become Roman subjects.

In addition to producing key military innovations, these wars and conquests of the early Republic brought Rome into increasing contact and closer relations with the other inhabitants of Italy. Roman culture benefited greatly from this as it incorporated elements of the languages, art, literature, and religion of other Italian peoples. However, this close contact also led to one of the thorniest issues of the Republican period: what to do with Rome's allies and the conquered peoples of Italy. Over time, many of these former foes sought political and legal equality with Roman citizens, and fierce debates over their proper status raged frequently in Rome. As will be discussed below, this issue reached crisis level by the late Republic.

After consolidating their hold on Latium, Etruria, Campania, and the central Apennine regions, Romans began to take an interest in matters further afield. Beginning in 281 BC and continuing well into the imperial period, Rome engaged in a series of wars that resulted in massive territorial expansion. These include the following:

Magna Graecia (281-272 BCE)

Having secured the mountain passes formerly dominated by the Samnites, Rome set her sights on the wealthy Greek cities of southern Italy. Ostensibly coming to the aid of the city of Thurii, Rome found herself at odds with the powerful city of Tarentum, touching off Rome's participation in the region's conflicts. The Romans were not alone in their interest in the region, however. In 281 BCE, Pyrrhus, ruler of the Balkan kingdom of Epirus, invaded Italy with an army of more than twenty thousand soldiers—including twenty war elephants loaned to him by Ptolemy II of Egypt. Pyrrhus took control of much of Magna Graecia and eventually parts of Sicily. Between then and 275 BC, he won a series of battles in which the Romans often took heavier casualties, but he underestimated Roman resolve and adaptability. As mentioned earlier, Romans saw themselves as survivors, stoics, and pragmatists; they simply did not quit, and they learned from their mistakes on the battlefield. Although Pyrrhus won most of the battles, he eventually lost the war and withdrew from Italy. The term *Pyrrhic victory* entered the vocabulary of Western civilization as a result of this war; following his costly victory at the Battle of Asculum in 279 BC, he reportedly said, "One more such victory will undo me!" With Pyrrhus's departure and the surrender of Tarentum to the Romans in 272 BCE, Rome became the dominant political force in southern Italy.

The Punic Wars (264–146 BC)

Over the course of more than a century, Rome fought a series of three wars with Carthage, a wealthy north African city founded originally by Phoenicians. When the wars began, Roman territory was confined to the Italian Peninsula. When they ended, Rome possessed large parts of North Africa, the southern half of the Iberian Peninsula (modern Spain), and the major islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. The territory of Rome more than quadrupled as a result of these wars, and it came to include significant overseas possessions. With her victories in the Punic Wars, Rome essentially controlled the western Mediterranean.

- *First War (264–241 BC)*: This war arose over the disputed control of Sicily, an important island positioned so as to divide the Mediterranean Sea into two halves. To compete with Carthage, Romans built a powerful navy and introduced innovations onto their ships that gave them an advantage over their enemies. The war ultimately proved to be one of attrition, and Rome's resources outlasted those of Carthage, who sued for peace after more than twenty years of intermittent fighting. As part of the peace terms, Carthage ceded Sicily to Rome. Not content with Sicily alone, the Romans pressed their advantage and seized Sardinia and Corsica as well. Though they were not able to prevent this annexation (arguably a violation of the peace terms), many Carthaginians came away from the war and its aftermath with a desire for revenge. In subsequent years, Carthage built up colonies in Iberia and prepared again for war.
- *Second War (218–201 BC)*: A brilliant Carthaginian general named Hannibal (son of a Carthaginian general from the first war) launched a land-based attack against Rome from Iberia, crossing the Alps with a sizable and well-trained army (including war elephants) and entering Italy from the north. Although he won numerous battles in the peninsula, often against more sizable Roman forces, he was never able to generate enough support among the Italian subjects of the Romans to attack Rome itself. He thus spent nearly fifteen years in Italy, winning occasional battles but failing to garner enough allies to pose a serious threat to Rome's hold on the peninsula. After biding their time and picking

their battles carefully, the Romans counterattacked, capturing Iberia, threatening Carthage, and forcing Hannibal to abandon his army in Italy and return hastily to Africa to organize his city's defense. At the Battle of Zama (202 BCE) the Roman general Scipio Africanus (236–183 BCE) dealt Hannibal's forces a resounding defeat. Hannibal fled Africa, eventually offering his services to Rome's enemies in the Eastern Mediterranean. Though he later committed suicide in Bithynia rather than allow himself to be captured, he continued to occupy a prominent place in the Roman imagination. In the *Aeneid*, an epic poem about Rome's foundation, the poet Virgil created a mythology of the Rome/Carthage rivalry, attributing its origins to a love affair gone bad between the Trojan hero Aeneas, founding father of the Latin people, and the Carthaginian queen Dido, who had previously fled Tyre to found Carthage. As she prepares to commit suicide, being unable to deal with Aeneas's rejection, Dido curses Aeneas and his progeny, calling on her own people to avenge her wrong: "When rage excites your arms, and strength supplies the rage / Rise some avenger of our Libyan blood, / With fire and sword pursue the perjur'd brood; / Our arms, our seas, our shores, oppos'd to theirs; / And the same hate descend on all our heirs!" (104). The "avenger" was, of course, Hannibal, the greatest and most dangerous of the Carthaginians. Hannibal aside, the consequences of defeat for Carthage were dire; she surrendered all of her territory except for the hinterland directly around Carthage itself, and she remained subordinate to Rome, yoked under heavy financial indemnities and other restrictions imposed her conquerors.

- *Third War (149–146 BC)*: Although defeated and largely stripped of lands, Carthage raised an army to defend itself from an attack by its neighbor, the Roman ally Numidia. Expressing alarm at the creation of another Carthaginian army, the Roman senator Cato the Elder famously declared, "*Carthago delenda est!*" (Carthage must be destroyed)—and it was. The Romans besieged the overmatch African city and, upon its capture, sold the surviving population into slavery. Rome later established a colony, to be inhabited by the surplus population of Rome and Italy, on the site of Carthage. Victory in the Punic Wars made Rome the unchallenged master of the western Mediterranean. With its greatest rival defeated, Rome turned its attention increasingly to other venues ripe for conquest.

Eastern Mediterranean (192-31 BCE)

Following the first two Punic Wars, Rome began a series of campaigns against the Hellenistic kingdoms of the Balkans. The Greek mainland, the province of Macedonia, and parts of western Asia Minor came under Roman control. These conquests continued into the first century BCE, when Octavian (Augustus Caesar) defeated Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BCE and seized Ptolemaic Egypt. Over the last century and a half of the Republican era, the Eastern Mediterranean served as an outlet for the personal ambitions of prominent Romans. As we shall see, the easiest path to power and honor in the late Republic was military conquest, and the weakened remnants of the Hellenistic kingdoms offered an easy venue for such accomplishments. It may sound paradoxical to state that Rome was undone by her extensive conquests, but the procuring and governing of an empire changed the political stakes for Rome so drastically that her cherished Republic did not survive intact.

Decline of the Roman Republic

Rome, though victorious in all of these contests, paid a heavy price for success. Most of the structures of government and social organization were created when Rome was merely a city-state, and the challenges of maintaining massive armies and governing far-flung territories were beyond the design of the Republic (imagine the mayor and city council of a small town being asked to govern an empire stretching across multiple continents). Though the Romans created new offices (e.g., promagistrates) and added responsibilities to others, most of their measures were merely *ad hoc*. Romans were intensely conservative by nature and resisted the sort of overhaul of government and society that was probably required to deal with the new territorial situation. They still fancied themselves unsophisticated farmers and adherents to the traditional ways of life under which their ancestors had operated.

Two major issues, both circumstances of territorial expansion, threatened to tear the Republic apart from the middle of the second century BCE onward. First, the Romans were unsure what to do with their Italian allies (e.g., Etruscans, Campanians), many of whom had been loyal to Rome, or at least had lived peacefully under Roman domination, for generations. The growth of Roman hegemony meant that Italy had grown increasingly unified in culture and economy (one of the reasons Hannibal had failed to turn Italians against Rome). The non-Roman Italians who participated in all other ways in the Roman system desired social and political equality; they wanted to be Roman citizens, and they adopted increasingly desperate means to extract this from their Roman rulers. Some powerful Romans were willing to extend citizenship, but they were opposed by conservatives who insisted on the continuation of traditional social distinctions.

The second issue--the question of the status of military veterans--was arguably even more divisive. The numerous and extended campaigns Rome fought over the course of the third and second centuries BCE took her soldiers far away from their homes and work for long periods of time. Rome did not have a professional army until late in the Republic; serving in the military was regarded as an honor and a duty, and Roman citizen-soldiers were not paid for their services, apart from receiving a small share of captured war booty. Thus, when these veterans returned home, they often found their farms and business neglected or ruined. The extensive lands--together with enslaved populations--seized from enemies like the Carthaginians were usually administered directly by the Roman magistrates and Senate and thus primarily benefited patricians. In fact, well-connected patricians often used their political leverage to procure gigantic personal landholdings and veritable armies of slave workers. These *latifundia* (slave-worked plantations) could grow crops more efficiently and cheaply than the small family farms of the plebeians, many of whom were veterans, and thus the plebeians found themselves crowded out of the agricultural market. Many saw no alternative except to sell their lands to patricians and move into the city of Rome, the population of which swelled during the late Republic. This growing contingent of disinherited plebeian veterans comprised a vocal, discontented, and formidable interest group that threatened to disrupt patrician-dominated politics.

Those who held power in Rome--primarily patricians, of course--responded in a variety of ways to these issues. Some took the side of the plebeians or the Italians, setting themselves up as champions of the downtrodden and disenfranchised. Politicians of this stripe tended to try to push legislation through the *concilium plebis*, the most volatile and plebeian-friendly of Roman political institutions. These figures became known as the *populares*. Others insisted that the strength of the Republic lay in the Romans' adherence to traditional forms of political and social organization, and they thus blocked any attempt at introducing change into the Republic. In their

minds, the Republic would continue to be strong if patrician desires were attended to first, for the patricians, they argued, ensured the prosperity of others with their wealth, patronage, and service to the Republic. Such politicians tended to insist upon the absolute necessity of Senatorial oversight, since the Senate was inherently resistant to change and protective of patrician interests. These figures came to be called *optimates*. The *populares* and *optimates* were not political parties in the modern sense of the term; the labels referred to schools of thought or approaches to politics, rather than to organized institutions. By way of analogy, Roman *populares* and *optimates* were more like "liberals" and "conservatives" (at least in American parlance) than Democrats and Republicans. In addition, both camps were led almost invariably by patricians who differed little in the scale of their personal ambitions but went about achieving those ambitions in different ways. It should also be said that few individuals fit completely or consistently into either of these two categories. Key figures in the late Republic--again, mostly patricians--often waffled between actions that appealed to the plebeians and stances that kept them close to their patrician peers. Politicians in the late Republic tended to favor whatever position or decision would ensure their own political advancement, as politicians have been wont to do in all ages. Indeed, personal ambition, at times on a monumental scale, was easily the most important factor in the dramatic events of the late Republic.

By the middle of the second century BCE, the aforementioned problems with the non-Roman Italians and the disinherited military veterans had grown into acute crises. The first to seek radical solutions to the crises were two brothers, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, whose maternal ancestors included Scipio Africanus, victor over Hannibal in the Second Punic War. Despite this patrician lineage, both brothers drew upon their paternal, plebeian heritage to obtain the office of tribune, a platform from which they set themselves up as champions of the common people in seeking radical reforms. Upon obtaining this office in 133 BCE, Tiberius proposed an agrarian reform law that would effectively strip public land (i.e., conquered land) from the owners of *latifundia* and redistribute it to poor plebeians, especially military veterans and their families. Sidestepping the inevitable opposition of the Senate, Tiberius took his proposal directly to the *concilium plebis*, who eagerly passed the law and named a commission, staffed by Tiberius and two of his family members, to oversee the redistribution. Angered by his actions, a patrician mob beat him to death in the center of Rome, but the land commission continued to operate. Tiberius's brother Gaius obtained the tribune office a decade after his brother and continued land reform and other popular measures until his assassination in 121 BCE. Though the Gracchi brothers did not live long enough to witness fundamental change, they established a template of political behavior for future *populares*. In addition, although the *optimates* did not join the *populares* in appealing to the plebeians, they still began to employ some of the same political tactics. Perhaps the most obvious and troubling consequence of this shift in Roman politics was the increasing predominance of civil violence. More and more in the last century of the Republic's existence, violence against other Romans constituted a viable, and increasingly primary, political maneuver.

Marius and Sulla

Roman politics of the later second and early first centuries BCE were dominated by two men: Gaius Marius, a *popularis*, military reformer, and seven-time consul, and Lucius Cornelius Sulla, an *optimas*, general, and eventual dictator. Though these two individuals positioned

themselves on opposite sides of the Roman political spectrum, they both used similar means to achieve the ends they desired.

In a pattern that would repeat itself again and again over the next several centuries, Marius obtained power by rising through success in the army. Marius was a *novus homo* (Latin "new man"), an individual who rose to patrician rank only in his lifetime. Although they enjoyed the wealth and privilege that came with this status, *novi homines* were usually looked down upon by their fellow senators, who prized the honor that came with ancestral wealth and ancestral accomplishments. Because of this prejudice, it was rare for a *novus homo* to find place in the *cursus honorum* or to rise to the rank of senator. The *novus homo* stigma hampered Marius's quest for political office early in his career, and he thus found himself siding with the *populares* in their effort to tear down the ensconced privilege of the senators. His political breakthrough came because of support from soldiers he commanded on campaign in north Africa, and he was elected consul for 107 BCE.

The consulship made Marius the chief military commander, and he quickly introduced fundamental military reforms that would change not only the nature of warfare but the stakes of Roman politics as well. Specifically, he revoked the property qualification for serving in the Roman army. Subsequently, the Roman army would be made up largely of poor citizens who relied entirely on their commander for maintenance and pay, including the distribution of land after the fighting was over. In effect, Marius created a professional army that was beholden entirely to him. Scholars have used the term "client army" to describe Marius's creation; this label is apt, for the soldiers were all clients of Marius. Henceforth, nearly every Roman with political ambition sought power through use of a client army. Marius's reformed, professional army achieved great victories in both north Africa and Gaul, and, bucking political tradition, he parlayed his military success into five straight consular elections, an accomplishment previously unimaginable in Roman politics. Although he would be consular twice more in later years, Marius tempered his *popularis* position after his long consulship. This allowed his rivals to maneuver into favorable military and political positions.

Lucius Cornelius Sulla was Marius's former subordinate whose brilliance as a military strategist had been key to the latter's victories. With Marius distracted by his own success and honor and with the Senate growing concerned about Marius's outsized power, Sulla soon emerged as the champion of the *optimates*. From 91 to 88 BCE, Rome fought a series of battles (collectively known as the "Social War") against their Italian allies, the continued denial of whose citizenship brought on desperate rebellion. Sulla's accomplishments on the battlefield in this war outshone even those of Marius, and, although the war ended with Rome making concessions to her opponents, Sulla parlayed his success into election as consul. This gave Sulla the opportunity to continue Roman conquest of Asia Minor. Before he could even depart from Italy, however, political brinkmanship with Marius's circle led Sulla to march his client army on Rome itself, an unprecedented step for a Roman commander. After seizing control of the city and exiling Marius and his allies, Sulla marched away to war in the east.

With Sulla away having considerable military success in the First Mithridatic War (89-85 BCE), the *populares*, with new leaders after Marius's death in 86 BCE, once again consolidated power in the city. Upon the sudden death (by military mutiny) of the reigning *popularis* consul, Sulla once again marched on Rome, defeated his rivals, and took control of the city. This time his victory led to far more than exile for his opponents. After forcing the Senate to declare him dictator, Sulla instigated a series of bloody purges, passing the death sentence upon about 1,500 opponents and ultimately executing as many as nine thousand persons. In addition, he seized the

property of those who were executed, stripping their families of wealth and political status, and redistributing their estates among his patrician allies. Notably, the youthful Julius Caesar escaped the purges and fled Rome. Sulla then attempted to halt future reforms by modifying qualifications for entry into the Senate, increasing the both number of *cursus honorum* magistrates and the power of the patrician-dominated courts, and revoking the tribunes' veto power. These measures were, of course, designed to make the patrician political position impregnable. Sulla's dictatorship was thus the high water mark for the *optimates*.

Even with Sulla's attempts to restore the traditional structures of the Republic, by the middle of the first century BCE it was clear to almost everyone that the old ways were defunct and that the path to power in Rome came through client armies and collusion with others. Sulla certainly had his supporters during his time in power, but their loyalty had more to do with the wealth he provided via proscriptions than with a commitment to his conservative political principles. Once Sulla retired from public life, an event followed quickly by his death, the consensus he had tried to build collapsed, leaving a political vacuum that would be filled in subsequent decades by men who possessed similarly outsized ambition but who lacked Sulla's commitment to principled political positions.

The First Triumvirate (60–53 BC)

The term *triumvirate* means "rule by three men." Two such organizations dominated Roman politics in the last thirty years of the Republic. Both began as alliances for the mutual benefit of all three participants, yet both also degenerated into the civil wars that brought down the Republic for good. The first triumvirate was formed when three prominent Romans stepped into the political confusion created by the retirement of Sulla and by a large-scale slave revolt in 73–71 BC led by a Thracian gladiator named Spartacus. The Triumvirate's members included two capable politician-generals, Julius Caesar (100–44) and Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (106–48, known as Pompey the Great); they were joined and financed by one of the wealthiest persons in Rome, Marcus Licinius Crassus (106–48, known by the name Crassus). Interestingly, both Pompey and Crassus had been supporters of Sulla and had gained their wealth through the proscriptions, while Julius Caesar, whose mother was Marius's sister, had been forced to flee for his life during Sulla's dictatorship. Yet the three buried these old animosities in favor of an arrangement whereby they agreed to support each other's political advancement. The alliance was kept secret at first, since it had no authority or precedent under any formulation of the Roman constitution. With mutual support guaranteed, all three aimed at the consulship and especially at the proconsulship that followed, a situation that promised command of a client army and the possibility of conquest and its attendant wealth and honor. All three ultimately achieved these goals, yet the realization of further ambitions varied among the three.

While the three *triumvirs* were forming their alliance, the voice of political conservatism was sounded in Rome by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43). An unlikely champion of the *optimates* since he was a *novus homo*, Cicero rose to prominence via a successful career as a lawyer and particularly on account of his oratorical skill. Elected consul for 63 BCE, he won honor by exposing a political conspiracy led by the senator Lucius Sergius Catilina. In truth, Catilina was doing very much the same thing as the *triumvirs*, but his plot lacked the caution, patience, and money of his more successful peers. This signal accomplishment of his consulship eventually backfired on Cicero, however, since many saw his actions as overreaching, given that Catilina was a respected senator from an old family and Cicero was a *novus homo*. After his

consulship, Cicero endured a sentence of exile, yet his ties to Pompey the Great enabled him to return to Rome after a brief time away from the city. Cicero remained the most prominent proponent of the traditional Republican system until his death in 44 BCE, and his speeches, letters, and writings on philosophy, rhetoric, and other topics endured for centuries and constitute some of the most influential works of the entire Roman period.

The First Triumvirate was ten years in the making. Pompey and Crassus were consuls together--though not necessarily as allies--in 70 BCE, while Caesar was regaining his political footing after his flight from Sulla's government. Then Caesar and Crassus formed a backroom alliance in Rome during the 60s BCE while Pompey used his military command in the east to achieve final victory a series (first begun by Sulla) of three conflicts known as the Mithridatic Wars (88–63 BCE), acquiring control of Asia Minor for the Romans. With the support of Caesar and other senators, Pompey continued his conquests into the Levant, ultimately adding both Seleucid Syria and Hasmonean Palestine to the burgeoning Roman hoard. However, when conservative senators expressed reluctance to ratify Pompey's land acquisitions and tried to deny the distribution of public land to his veterans, the successful general agreed to the alliance with Crassus and Caesar, both of whom were worried about their own pet issues, and he even married Caesar's daughter Julia as a sign of his commitment.

With the support of the other two *triumvirs*, Caesar became consul in 59 BCE and maneuvered his way into a ten-year proconsular command over four legions in Gaul. Over those ten years, Caesar achieved remarkable military success, ultimately annexing the entirety of Gaul (roughly the territory of modern France and Belgium). These conquests brought Caesar both tremendous wealth and nearly unsurpassed honor and fame. Key to this growing popularity were Caesar's own accounts of the war (*Bellum Gallicum*) which were circulated to great reviews in Rome. Although Pompey and Crassus were again consuls together in 55 BCE, the alliance fractured with two deaths in 53 BCE: Crassus's on campaign in the east and Julia's during childbirth. Wary of Caesar's growing wealth and popularity and with no incentive to continue their relationship, Pompey allied himself with the cohort of *optimates*, including Cicero and Cato the Younger (95-46; leader of the conservative camp). With Pompey and his loyal soldiers firmly on their side, the senators ordered Caesar to disband his army and return to Rome.

Rather than obey the Senate's command and thus cede political advantage to Pompey, Caesar decided instead to pursue civil war, crossing the Rubicon River (the physical boundary of his military authority and the beginning of the Senate's territory) in 49 BCE. Despite enjoying numerical and logistical superiority, Pompey and his army proved unequal to the challenge of facing Caesar and his hardened, desperate soldiers. After suffering a decisive defeat at the Battle of Pharsalus in Greece in 48 BCE, Pompey fled to Egypt and was murdered by the Ptolemaic Pharaoh Ptolemy XIII (who hoped to win Caesar's support in a dispute with his niece Cleopatra over the throne in Alexandria). Receiving Pompey's head in a box upon his arrival in Egypt, Caesar became enraged and plotted (and fathered a child) with Cleopatra to overthrow her uncle and take control of Alexandria. In truth, Caesar probably would have pardoned Pompey as he had so many of his rival's allies, including Cicero and Marcus Junius Brutus (85-42), who would of course play a decisive role in Caesar's later assassination. With nothing more to fear from the reduced Pompey, Caesar stood to gain far more honor from allowing his defeated foe to live than he did by ordering his death.

Pompey's death left Caesar the sole master of the Roman world. After rooting out remaining pockets of resistance to his authority, Caesar returned triumphant to the city that now dominated the entire Mediterranean (even Cleopatra's Egypt, though technically still

independent, was little more than a tributary monarchy at this point). Having lost all regard for what he perceived to be a corrupt and inept Republic, Caesar had the Senate appoint him dictator for life (*dictator perpetuo*) and consolidated several other positions in his own person. He seemed to many to be setting up a monarchy, a prospect that was still abhorrent to many Romans, even with all of the upheaval of the previous decades. On 15 March 44 BCE (Shakespeare's famous "Ides of March"), a conspiracy of *optimates* senators headed by Brutus and Gaius Longinus Cassius (85-42) and stabbed Caesar to death during a meeting of the Senate. The Roman civil wars were not at an end, after all.

The Second Triumvirate (43–31 BC)

To deal with the upheaval caused by Caesars' assassination, a second Roman triumvirate was created, albeit formally this time through the promulgation in 43 BCE of a law called the *Lex Titia*. This law created a commission of three Romans (i.e., the triumvirate) charged to restore the Republic—a responsibility they did not fulfill. The law further gave each member of the triumvirate full consular authority, including the power to appoint magistrates without elections and other similar enabling or emergency powers. The members of this Second Triumvirate were two of Caesar's key deputies, Marcus Aurelius Lepidus (89–12) and Marcus Antonius (83–30), and Caesar's nephew, adopted son, and heir Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (63 BCE–14 CE, known later as Augustus). Although they were content initially with this arrangement, the ambitions of all three (or at least Antony and Octavian) outstripped this partnership, and, after a brief period of working together, they ultimately pursued another round of civil war.

Using proscriptions in a fashion similar to Sulla, the triumvirs quickly eliminated political rivals, including Cicero, who had tried and failed to bring warring parties together after Caesar's assassination and who emerged subsequently as a vocal opponent (in his *Philippics*) of Antony's vengeful ambition. With their enemies eliminated or on the run, Octavian and Antony pursued the assassins of Julius Caesar, Brutus and Cassius, to Greece and defeated them in 42 BCE at Philippi. The triumvirate agreed to divide the territories of the Republic into three regions through the Treaty of Brundisium in 40 BCE: Octavian took most of the West, while Lepidus was given control of Hispania and Africa. Antony took charge of the East, with all the wealth and opportunity for further expansion it offered. The triumvirs also saw to the deification of Julius Caesar, an accomplishment that allowed Octavian, Caesar's adopted to son, to claim divinity. Although Antony had married Octavian's sister Octavia to strengthen the triumvirs' relationship, he quickly embroiled himself in a romantic affair with Cleopatra, who had invited him to visit her in Alexandria. This amorous distraction proved fatal for Antony as he lost sight of Octavian's ambitious political maneuvers.

A supremely skilled manipulator of public opinion who surrounded himself with capable military and other advisors, Octavian located and exploited the political weakness of his erstwhile allies. With Antony cavorting with his Egyptian queen, Octavian quickly and unilaterally sidelined Lepidus, removing him from the triumvirate and taking charge of his regions. Moreover, he used his formidable capacity to gather intelligence to obtain damning information about Antony, including a will in which Antony promised substantial landholdings to the children he sired with Cleopatra. Octavian painted a convincing picture of Antony's treachery before the Roman senate and public and enjoyed overwhelming support in the capital. The growing divide between Octavian and Antony came to a head at the naval Battle of Actium

in 31 BCE. Antony's navy was seriously undermanned due to an outbreak of malaria and lacked the oar power necessary to use his ships as rams, a mainstay of ancient naval warfare in the West. With its more maneuverable and fully-manned ships, Octavian's navy inflicted a decisive defeat. By the next day, some nineteen legions deserted Antony, together with thousands of his cavalry. Antony's career was at an end—although there were other skirmishes in places such as Alexandria—and the civil war was effectively over. The romantic suicides of Antony and Cleopatra merit mention: Antony stabbed himself and eventually died in Cleopatra's arms, whereas she, according to tradition, put a poison asp to her breast and died from the bite.

Like Caesar before him, Octavian emerged from Actium as sole ruler of all Roman territory and government. His rule would not, however, end in assassination. Instead, Octavian presided carefully over the transition from Republic to Empire, the subject of the next section.

Roman *Imperium* (31 BCE-285 CE)

The Empire began with the ascension of Octavian, known as Augustus after a 27 BCE senate proclamation, to the pinnacle of power in Rome in 31 BC. The government that Augustus created--known as the principate (after Augustus's preferred title *princeps*)--persisted for more than three hundred years. Since many of the emperors who followed Augustus were incapable and even foolhardy, the longevity of the principate is at least partially a testament to the care and genius of its founder, whose own rule lasted nearly a half century. During these three hundred years, Roman government ruled with relative peace over a vast territory stretching eventually from the British Isles to Mesopotamia, with the Mediterranean (called by the Romans *mare nostrum*, or "our sea") at its center. Rome absorbed most of the lands and many of the ruling strategies of the earlier Persian and Hellenistic Empires, although Romans never fully lost sight of either their agrarian origins or their Republican values. This hegemony, known as the *pax romana*, was one of the most stable and enduring political systems in world history, and it has inspired the imagination of westerners for two millennia. We should caution, however, against assuming that imperial Rome was entirely stable. Political succession, immigration, unstable currency, and other vital political and economic issues bedeviled the Romans throughout the period of empire, and the internal weaknesses of imperial system led the Empire into upheaval and nearly to collapse at several points over the course of these centuries. The political, economic, and cultural systems of the Roman Empire comprise the subject matter of the balance of this chapter. The continuation and transformation of the empire in late antiquity is taken up the in the following chapter.

The Principate

After Actium, Augustus was in position to exercise ultimate control over the Empire, but he saw the importance of exercising caution. After all, he was in essentially the same position as Julius Caesar had been in fifteen years prior. To protect himself against assassination or rebellion in the short term, and to build an enduring political system centered on his own person in the long term, Augustus proceeded with great care along several different paths of political reform. His overall strategy included four major elements: 1) eliminating enemies and political rivals; 2) concentrating an unrivaled fortune in his personal coffers; 3) keeping at least the appearance of the Republic in place; and 4) consolidating the key governmental offices and political powers into his own person. Rather than laying claim to absolute power immediately after his decisive

victory, he moved patiently and incrementally to secure near-absolute rule. This patience was perhaps the most important key to his ultimate success.

With his main rivals, Antony and Cleopatra, out of the way, Augustus moved to eliminate the few remaining individuals who might raise a rival claim to his power. The proscriptions he and his colleagues had pursued early in the Second Triumvirate had already eliminated many potential rivals, but Octavian now executed Cesarion, Cleopatra's son by Julius Caesar, knowing that the boy's claim to Caesar's legacy was at least as good as his own. To other erstwhile allies of Antony, including the Judaean king Herod, Octavian showed magnanimity, forgiving their offenses and extending his friendship. This combination of ruthlessness and mercy enlarged his stature in the eyes of the Roman people.

The death of Cleopatra brought an end to the three-hundred-year rule of the Ptolemies, and the dynasty's tremendous wealth (with the bounty of the Nile, Egypt was the most productive region of the Mediterranean) fell into Octavian's hands. Rather than turn the governing of this region over to the Senate, Octavian retained Egypt as his own personal possession. He also retained direct governance over other key regions. The vast wealth he accrued from Egypt and his other territories left him with a personal fortune that was vastly larger than those of his senatorial colleagues. This fortune in turn allowed him to pursue projects that no one else could have pursued--from building temples and infrastructure projects to settling military veterans on farms to sponsoring forms of entertainment on a scale heretofore unknown. Rome was and had always been a timocracy, so the fact that its wealthiest citizen used his unrivaled fortune to achieve unrivaled power was not a problem for most Romans; it was, in fact, the natural order of things.

Having learned from the example of Julius Caesar, who was killed for enacting reforms too blithely and quickly for conservative Roman tastes, Octavian proceeded with governmental reform cautiously and patiently. Although he retained control of the Roman armies and all the provinces after Actium, he made a show of handing this power back over to the Senate in 27 BCE. This was a calculated maneuver on his part; Octavian figured his unparalleled wealth, popularity, political indispensability, and intimate ties to influential Romans through patronage networks would force the senators to beg for his continued participation in government, and he was correct. They beseeched him to retain control of the unstable provinces, and he agreed. This settlement effectively gave him continued control of the army, the majority of the remaining legions of which were stationed on the frontier. In 23 BCE, he stepped down from the position of consul, to which he had been elected every year since Actium. This time, although the Senate begged him to continue holding the consular position, he refused. He did, however, allow the Senate to bestow on him a number of titles and powers. These collectively gave him access to all the constitutional and traditional powers he would need to continue his reforms and to retain his stranglehold on the Roman government. Perhaps most importantly, he accepted the office of tribune for life and thus held permanently the *imperium* that accompanied that office. The Senate also revived two old republican titles for Octavian: *Augustus* and *Princeps*. The former meant "illustrious one" and carried with it a sense of religious authority that Octavian (henceforth called simply "Augustus" or "Augustus Caesar") exploited frequently. To secure even more religious authority, he took up the title of *pontifex maximus* after the death of his old partner Lepidus (who held that title) in 12 BCE. The title of *princeps* (literally "first head") meant initially that Augustus would be listed and recognized as the primary senator. This allowed him to speak first and at will during meetings of the Senate. However, this title came to take on the meaning of "first citizen" during Augustus's rule; Augustus exploited this title to press forward

the claim, or to retain the veneer, of traditional republican authority, and he crafted his public image to fit with this title. Rather than build a palace or dress in royal regalia, he continued to live in an apartment (the relatively modest *Domus Augusti* on the Palatine Hill) and to wear a traditional senatorial toga. He made himself accessible to the people, even taking walks around Rome and engaging other citizens in conversation. Augustus is usually identified as the first Roman emperor (and he did hold the republican military title of *imperator* from which that word is derived), but his actual political authority was not so simple or straightforward as that single title connotes.

During the reign of Augustus, which extended for over four decades until his death in 14 CE, the Senate continued to meet and conduct business (often busywork assigned them by Augustus), consuls continued to be elected, and many other institutions and features of the old Roman Republic continued to function. However, all of the important political and military decisions were made by Augustus himself. His long, successful, and prosperous reign allowed people to grow accustomed to a political system with a single man at its head. At the same time, the values and cultural institutions that went hand in hand with Roman government began to shift as well. Honor, that most republican of all Roman virtues and formerly obtained through good heredity and heroic deeds, came to be tied to one's proximity to and intimacy with Augustus himself. By the end of his life, Romans expected the system to continue under a successor, and few balked at Augustus's identification of his heir as the next emperor.

As noted, Augustus was a superbly skilled propagandist, and he continued to use that skill throughout his long reign to cement his position and press his reforms. Some of the most important works of literature and art in Roman history were composed during his reign as part of his propaganda program. Augustus set himself up as a patron--*the* patron of all patrons--of a recruited cadre of talented writers, artists, and architects, all of whom were devoted to glorifying and enhancing his rule and his person. Scholars view Augustan Age (the name given to the high cultural achievements of this period) art and literature as a high point in Roman cultural production. Three works in particular will occupy our attention: the epic poem called *The Aeneid*, the *Ara Pacis* or "Altar of Peace," and the funerary inscription known as the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*.

The Aeneid

Among the numerous statues and monuments declaring and magnifying the power and achievements of Augustus, the epic poem *Aeneid* stands as perhaps the greatest publicity achievement of his reign, which fact does not diminish its greatness as a supreme work of poetry. An advisor named Maecenas brought the pastoral work of the poet Virgil to the attention of Augustus, who commissioned the poet to write an epic that connected his reign to the distant, heroic past. Virgil drew on the works of Homer and on Roman ancestral myths that attributed the founding of Latium to Trojan refugees. Borrowing a minor character from Homer's *Iliad*--the Trojan warrior Aeneas--Virgil set him at the center of a Mediterranean epic that stretched from the destruction of Troy to the foundation of Phoenician Carthage to the western coast of Italy. In twelve books--the first six of which take their cues from *The Odyssey*, and the second six of which imitate *The Iliad*--Virgil told the backstory of the establishment of Rome. In the narrative, Aeneas, son of Anchises (a mortal) and the immortal goddess Venus, is instructed to flee Troy during its fiery destruction by the Achaeans and to take his father, his household, and his gods to safety rather than fight in a hopeless cause. Juno, queen of the gods, despises all Trojans and thus

attempts to thwart Aeneas at every turn. Aeneas, however, is guided by fate to found Latium and is supported not only by his divine mother but also by Jupiter, master of the fates. Blown off course by a storm arranged by Juno, Aeneas and his crew are forced to land on the coast of Africa, where he receives aid from Dido, the queen of Carthage. Using her divine abilities, Venus causes Dido to fall in love with Aeneas, and even Juno goes along with this turn of events, thinking that love will keep Aeneas from reaching Italy. Through Mercury, however, Jupiter quickly reminds Aeneas of his fate, and Aeneas abandons Dido, who curses him and commits suicide.

After Aeneas crosses the Mediterranean to arrive at last in Italy, a prophetess, the Cumaean Sibyl, tells Aeneas to descend into the underworld and speak with his now-deceased father. With the Sibyl as his guide, he traverses the River Styx and descends into the Underworld, meeting old acquaintances along the way, including Dido (an awkward meeting to be sure) who languishes in the Fields of Mourning on account of her suicide and unrequited love. When Aeneas reaches the Elysian Fields, the shade (ghost) of Anchises reveals his fate, prophesying that Aeneas will return to the land of the living and establish a kingdom in Italy. Anchises also prophesies that Aeneas's descendants, Romulus and Remus, will found Rome and that the greatest of his progeny, Augustus Caesar, will lead Rome to world dominance. His fate now revealed, Aeneas returns to the upper world to wage war against Turnus, king of the Rutuli, whom he defeats. Though Virgil never extended the story beyond the death of Turnus, it is clear that Aeneas will marry Lavinia, the daughter of the Latin king Latinus, and establish his own powerful kingdom, uniting Latins and Trojans in the process.

Although Virgil died without completing the work and indeed requested that it be destroyed upon his death, Augustus himself ordered its preservation. After all, the poem did exactly what Augustus desired; that is, it wove together the heroic Mediterranean past (borrowing heavily from Homer in the process) with the glorious history of Rome and linked both traditions to the culminating reign of Augustus himself. Several elements of the poem merit attention. First, Aeneas is portrayed as the embodiment of all Roman virtues, including, notably, *pietas* (showing respect to gods, elders, and tradition and devoting attention to one's duty to the state), *dignitas* (honor, as described above), and *firmitas* (determination in the face of challenge). As the character of Aeneas implicitly parallels that of Augustus, the emperor was likewise the exemplar of virtues. Second, by including the tragic love affair between Aeneas and Dido, Virgil accounted historically for the definitive rivalry between Rome and Carthage. Just before her suicide, Dido calls for an avenger to rise up from her lineage and seek revenge on the seed of Aeneas; Romans certainly understood this to be a reference to Hannibal. Third, in the underworld, Anchises explains the life of the souls who inhabit Elysium, remarking that many of them await a kind of reincarnation: after a thousand years in Elysium, they drink from the River Lethe, which bestows forgetfulness. They are then born again to new mortal lives. Anchises shows Aeneas the souls of Julius Caesar and Augustus, among others, waiting for this eventual rebirth. The implication is that Augustus and other heroic Romans were in fact reborn souls of past heroes. Fourth and finally, since Augustus is revealed to be Aeneas's descendant, he is not a usurper ruling by force of arms, but is rather the legitimate heir to Aeneas, ruling Rome by right of succession. The *Aeneid* not only helped justify the rule of Augustus on legal grounds, but placed Augustus and Aeneas in a positive comparative light as embodying all of the virtues Romans believed helped to establish and maintain the Republic.

Ara Pacis

Perhaps the most enduring artistic monument from the reign of Augustus, the *Ara Pacis*, or Altar of Peace, was constructed in Rome as an expression of the virtues and accomplishments of Augustus. Like *The Aeneid*, the Ara Pacis connects the person and political program of Augustus to the ancient, heroic mythology of Rome. Reliefs of *Roma* (divine, feminine personification of the city), Romulus and Remus, and Aeneas adorn various panels of the altar. The most famous of the altar's sculptures, however, feature a procession of the family of Augustus, accompanied by governmental and religious officials carrying symbols of political power. The message of the procession is abundantly clear: Augustus is the legitimate ruler and benevolent *paterfamilias* of all Romans, and his family members are heirs to his power and positions.

Res Gestae

Another important piece of propaganda literature was issued by Augustus himself just before his death, with orders to place inscriptions of the text in public places in Rome and other important cities in the empire. Known as the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* ("Deeds of the Divine Augustus") and written in first person, this text lists Augustus's most notable political accomplishments. Carefully worded to emphasize the positives of his rule and reforms, the text portrays Augustus above all as the preserver of the Roman Republic. For example, the text is careful to point out the numerous times that Augustus rejected or handed over political power and portrays Augustus as merely a tool of the Senate and the consuls. It depicts Augustus both as a ruthless conqueror and battlefield commander and as a magnanimous bringer of peace to Rome and her diverse peoples. The purpose of this text seems to have been to cement in place the new political order, with Augustus's heirs--known collectively as the Julio-Claudian Dynasty--at its head. Yet the text also appeals to the sensibilities of conservatives who held onto romantic notions of the Republic. In other words, the text offers a perfect summation of Augustus's entire political program.

Julio-Claudian Dynasty

For all his successes--and these were transformative, to be sure--Augustus did struggle to find purchase with a few of his projects. One example is his attempt to expand the empire's territory beyond the northern borders, comprised of the Rhine and Danube Rivers. At the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE, three Roman legions were obliterated by Germanic troops, thus checking the Roman advance and spoiling Augustus's excellent record of military achievements. He also largely failed in his attempts to impose moral legislation--ostensibly a return to Republican values--on the Roman people. In this effort he was undermined by his own family, particularly his scandalous daughter Julia. Finally and most importantly, Augustus had a very difficult time securing an heir to his personal fortune and his position as the *princeps*. He went to great lengths to secure the permanence of his reforms (hence the carefully-crafted message of the *Res Gestae*) and he tried long before his death to position his heirs to step into his place. Unfortunately, his chosen heirs--his son-in-law and chief general Agrippa and then his two grandsons--all died before he did. Finally, he was left with no option except to bestow his inheritance on his step-son Tiberius (his wife Livia's son from her first marriage).

Tiberius (ruled 14-37 CE) was not Augustus's first choice as heir, and it was probably his unhappy marriage to Augustus's daughter Julia that drove her to the scandals for which she is famous. With Augustus's sponsorship, Tiberius had been awarded military commands and governmental positions before assuming the role of *princeps*, and these experiences did produce in him a keen aptitude for military and political strategy. He was successful as a field general, winning a number of battles on the northern frontier over the course of his military career. Compared to Augustus, however, he was a relatively ineffective emperor. His disagreements with senators and weariness over the grind of his position eventually led him to abandon Rome and to govern from his palace in Capri on the Campanian coast. His corrupt advisors in Rome took care of most of the day-to-day business of governing.

Subsequent emperors in the Julio-Claudian dynasty were even more ineffective that Tiberius. Gaius (known also as Caligula, ruled 37-41 CE) and Nero (ruled 54-69 CE) were scandalous figures, notorious for their neglect of responsibilities (e.g., the fire that destroyed much of Rome during Nero's reign), bloody purges of rivals, and personal neuroses. The exception was Claudius, who managed to extend Rome's conquests to the British Isles, where the Roman province of Brittannia was formed. He was also a prolific writer, particularly of historical works. However, his disabilities (he seems to have walked with a limp and to have spoken with a stutter, possibly due to cerebral palsy or some other malady) made him the subject of derision and served to lessen the stature of the dynasty in the eyes of elite Romans. When Nero committed suicide in 68, no heirs of the family of Augustus remained.

Pax Romana

While some may have rejoiced at the demise of the unpopular Nero, a century of Julio-Claudian rule had accustomed Romans to rule by an emperor. The question of who would assume power was settled after some jockeying for the throne by Vespasian, a general in command of the legions in the eastern Mediterranean. At the time of Nero's death, Vespasian was in the midst of quelling a rebellion in Judea--the First Jewish Revolt of 66-73 CE. Leaving his son Titus (who eventually retook Jerusalem and burned the Jewish temple) in charge in Judea, Vespasian consolidated his control over important resources in in Egypt and sent loyal troops to Italy to fight rival claimants to the throne. With his armies victorious and with the Senate proclaiming him emperor, he sailed for Rome and began his rule, the first of the Flavian Dynasty. He was followed by his sons Titus (ruled 79-81) and Domitian (81-96). While the death of the controversial Domitian brought an end to this brief dynasty, Vespasian set an important precedent that would be repeated over and over during the imperial era: when imperial succession was in question, military generals were the most likely to occupy the throne, since they were most likely to command the loyalty of the army. Military emperors needed to balance their powers against those of the Roman senate, but the army would play the role of kingmaker repeatedly over the next several centuries.

The Flavian Dynasty was followed by the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty (96-192 CE), whose most prominent members (Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius) were labeled by Edward Gibbon "the five good emperors." While Gibbon's nostalgic take on this period has been problematized by more recent historians, this was the era in which Rome reached its greatest territorial extent and arguably its cultural high point as well. Ruling from the British Isles to (briefly) the Persian Gulf, the emperors presided over a time of political stability

and relative prosperity. Indeed, the Roman imperial system of this era has been called the *pax romana*, or Roman Peace.

What were the keys to this stability? First, succession to the imperial throne in this period was stable: political agreements between the army and the Senate (the potential kingmakers) led to a system wherein each reigning emperor chose and groomed his successor for several years to prepare for eventual political transition. It helped that several emperors in succession had no sons who survived to adulthood and were forced instead to choose capable men from the ranks of their clients. This precluded the likelihood of an unprepared successor chosen on the basis of heredity rather than merit. In fact, easily the worst emperor of the dynasty was the delusional, scandalous Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, who was assassinated in 192, bringing an end to the dynasty.

A second key to the success and stability of the Roman Empire was its system of shared governance and its accompanying flexible legal system. While Rome administered many of its provinces through governors who reported directly to the emperor, in most places it also allowed traditional authorities to hold onto some amount of power, either alongside Roman officials or in semi-autonomous fashion. The pressures of Romanization (a continuation of the Hellenization of previous eras) led many local elites to adopt Roman lifestyles and customs and to pursue Roman education. For instance, many provincial authorities incorporated the republican concept of honor into their social and political relationships. Romans were usually very tolerant of local customs and religions, unless they appeared subversive to the peace and stability of the empire (as did Christianity in second-century Bithynia, where the provincial governor Pliny the Younger arrested and executed a Christian congregation on charges of political subversion). A dual legal system--one set of laws for Roman citizens and another for non-Roman subjects--institutionalized this tolerance and left the various peoples of the empire free to worship their local gods, follow their local laws, and retain their local forms of social and political organization.

The empire also maintained stability by providing amenities to its residents, even in far-flung provinces. While the Romans did not match earlier Greek accomplishments in philosophy and theoretical science (many of the greatest philosophical and scientific minds of the Roman imperial era were Greeks, including the renowned physician Galen, whose writings formed the textual basis of medicine for fifteen hundred years), they were accomplished engineers. Roman aqueducts brought fresh water into urban centers, and Roman sanitation systems (including indoor plumbing in some elite houses) carried waste away. Roman roads allowed for easy travel and transportation of goods throughout the empire, and the Roman navy kept the seas mostly free from pirates. Easy transportation was a particularly important factor because it ensured a consistent food supply to urban centers. Emperors enhanced their popularity by distributing free grain to the poor inhabitants of Rome. Romans built new cities and refashioned older cities on a master template with five basic features: 1) a collonaded mainstreet (called a *cardo*, the same root word as "heart"); 2) a hippodrome for chariot racing and other entertainments; 3) a temple for the ritual observance of the local civic cult (i.e., the worship of the city's patron god or goddess); 4) a theatre for public meetings and performances; and 5) a bath house, which served both hygienic and social purposes. While such amenities appealed initially to Roman soldiers and colonists from Italy, local residents soon grew accustomed to these offerings such that they became a source of civic pride. Indeed, uniform city planning was one of the chief ways Romans achieved buy-in from diverse local populations. The consistency of architectural styles--the rounded arch, the dome, etc.--across the empire also furnished a sense of unity and uniformity.

While the Pantheon, the Arch of Titus, the Flavian Amphitheatre (i.e., the Colosseum), and the Baths of Caracalla constitute quintessential examples of Roman architecture in the capital itself, the features and functions of these structures were imitated throughout the vast empire. Finally, Roman officials provided appealing forms of entertainment, both in the capital and in the provinces. In the famous Flavian Amphitheatre and other venues, Romans enjoyed gladiatorial games, mock naval battles, exotic beasts hunts, public executions, and other popular spectacles. Chariot racing was the most popular pastime, drawing hundreds of thousands of spectators weekly to the Circus Maximus in Rome and corresponding numbers to hippodromes all over the empire. Gladiator fights, beast hunts, and public executions were also very popular. The Roman satirist Juvenal remarked famously that the emperors kept their people satisfied with "panis et circenses" (bread and circuses); while Juvenal meant this as a criticism of the lack of public will, his phrase provides an apt summary of Roman imperial success.

Crisis of the Third Century (AD 235–284)

The Crisis of the Third Century, sometimes referred to as the period of "military anarchy," was basically a period in which the Empire almost collapsed from civil war due to battles over succession to the throne, threats of invasion from Sassanid Persia and Germania to the north, and economic depression and plagues (probably smallpox-related). The protracted crisis began when Emperor Severus Alexander (the last of the military-focused Severan Dynasty) was assassinated in 235 by his own guards following a series of military defeats. Rome had seventeen emperors over a period of 211 years (31 BCE to 180 CE). In contrast, there were 26 emperors acclaimed by the Senate during the 49 years between 235 and 284, after which Diocletian managed to restore stability to the throne. This number includes several who were murdered by the Praetorian Guard, and at least one emperor who won the throne in an auction. Almost all of these emperors were military men who rose to the throne with the support of the legions, who demanded increasing payments in exchange for continued support. This led certain emperors to debase Roman coins, leading to high levels of inflation and damaging trade and commerce in the process. The countryside in many places reverted to bartering and subsistence farming. The near collapse of the economy affected all classes of society: large landed estates lost cash-crop income, artisans and middle-strata *commerçants* lost trade, laborers wanted for employment, and peasants were reduced to virtual slavery. Despite the emperors' singular focus on the army, Rome suffered several significant military defeats at the hands of the newly-ascendant Sassanid Persians. The Sassanid emperor Shapur I took the Roman emperor Valerian captive after defeating him at the Battle of Edessa in 260; poor Valerian spent the rest of his life serving as Shapur's personal slave, even serving as a human footstool whenever Shapur mounted his horse. Former Roman clients wrested parts of the empire away and attempted to create new empires centered in Gaul and Palmyra. With border security in disarray, Germanic peoples migrated into Rome in increasing numbers, prompting Roman emperors to employ them as frontier soldiers. The Germanization of the Roman army would continue into the fourth and fifth centuries, with significant political consequences. In sum, Rome nearly collapsed under the joint pressure of political instability, economic disaster, and external pressure, and only the radical reforms of Diocletian and Constantine (next chapter) would allow Rome's continued existence as an empire, albeit one in altered form.

Conclusion

The Romans, from their humble origins as a farming community in the eighth century BCE to the height of their Mediterranean empire in the second century CE, developed the most sustained and advanced government in the ancient West. Their administrative, governmental, and engineering heritage exercised a lasting impact and is reflected in the governments and societies of the Western world today. Though the Romans were the beneficiaries of the cultural, social, and political experiments of earlier civilizations, they proved to be the most adaptable and consequently successful of ancient civilizations. Far from succumbing to the crises of the third century, Rome recovered and persisted as an intact, united empire for two more centuries, as a truncated empire for over a millennium, and as a symbol of peace, stability, and advancement into the modern era.

CHAPTER 5

Late Antiquity

"Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says to its God, 'Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.'"

--Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*

Introduction

Beginning in the sixteenth century, historians began to identify the fourth through sixth centuries as the period of the "Fall" of Rome. This era came to be seen as one of political decadence and decline, of barbarian invasions, and of the descent into superstition and lawlessness. The eighteenth-century English historian Edward Gibbon, a product of Enlightenment thought, immortalized this sorry picture in his famous tome *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Only in recent decades has this vision of a descent into religious superstition, intellectual stupor, and political chaos been challenged. Historians have begun to examine this period on its own terms, viewing the vicissitudes of this era as acts of positive transformation, survival, creation, and vitality rather than as components of "fall." As for "Rome," scholars have noted its remarkable survival both as a conceptual ideal and as a political reality, though in a modified, fragmented, and varied forms. This chapter will follow this latter interpretation, though it will confront the former view, since that understanding continues to maintain a place in the popular imagination.

The Origins of Christianity

Before dealing with the political machinations of the empire, it is necessary to backtrack in order to account for the rise of the religion that would become in this era the dominant cultural force in western civilization, a distinction it would not relinquish even into modern times. Christianity began as an obscure sect of Judaism in the relative backwater province of Judea. The religion commanded only a small following for the first three centuries of its existence before it burst spectacularly onto the political and cultural scene in the early fourth century, extending its influence into every sphere of Roman civilization.

Jesus of Nazareth is viewed understandably as perhaps the most influential individual in human history, given the vast number of adherents to Christianity over the past two millennia. So great has been his influence that the western calendrical system begins with the year commonly associated with his birth. This fame and following belie his humble origins in the rural north of the small and frequently-unstable Roman province of Judea. Jesus was a Jew and was probably trained as a rabbi, or interpreter of the Jewish law. Though he left behind no writings of his own, communities of his followers in the decades and centuries after his death composed various accounts of his life--the Gospels. Out of the dozens of Gospels written over four centuries, four of these accounts--attributed to four of Jesus's early disciples--were eventually accepted by most

Christians as authoritative or canonical. Even these canonical Gospels differ from each other both in the characterization of Jesus and in the narration of the events of Jesus's life, the natural result of different authors from different communities collecting and writing different memories at a remove of at least a generation or two.

The canonical Gospels and other early sources present two dominant images of Jesus that have existed in some tension with each other throughout Christian history. On the one hand, Jesus is presented as a radical rabbi, an interpreter of the Jewish law, who was seemingly not afraid to offer his own unique pronouncements that flew in the face of prevailing interpretations. In fact, these texts often depict Jesus in direction confrontation with other religious authorities. His early followers came at least partly from the coterie of another freelance preacher, John the Baptist, a radical figure executed by one of the sons of Herod the Great. Given the unstable political and cultural atmosphere of first century Judea, it is not surprising to find figures like Jesus and John, nor is it surprising to find that Jesus attracted disciples with epithets like *Zelotes* ("the zealot"), a certain reference to the faction of Jews who sought to break away from Roman rule. Jesus's teachings are usually couched in simple, catchy turns of phrase and in parables, simple allegories wherein everyday images represent ethical principles.

This image of Jesus as original, radical preacher stands in juxtaposition with the other dominant image in the Gospels: Jesus the miracle-worker. Alongside accounts of his sermons and parables, one finds many accounts of Jesus healing individuals stricken with various maladies: blindness, lameness, leprosy, palsy, and even death. The Jesus of the Gospels makes prophetic utterances and perceives the interior thoughts of his interlocutors. The most significant miracle narrated in these texts is his own resurrection. All four canonical Gospels and many other early Christian texts proclaim that Jesus rose from the dead three days after executed by crucifixion (a fairly common yet intensely painful method of execution) for sedition by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. The story of Jesus's resurrection was akin to the mythologies of the Hellenistic- and Roman-era mystery cults. Like the adherents of the cults of Isis, Mithras, and others, the followers of Jesus believed that his power over death would be offered to his followers. Early Christian communities developed rituals and systems of belief that offered both interpretations of his teachings and spiritual access to his divine presence and miraculous power.

In the generation or so after the life of Jesus, his followers spread the Christian message throughout Judea and then beyond the Jewish province, organizing gatherings of Christians initially among Diaspora Jews and then converting non-Jews. Key to this evangelizing effort was Paul of Tarsus. Born in Asia Minor to a Jewish family who had gained Roman citizenship, Paul (or Saul as he was known originally) was trained as a rabbi, possibly in the circle of the famous scholar Gamaliel. Initially a persecutor of Christians, Paul was converted to Christianity, according to the New Testament book of Acts, by a heavenly vision. Viewed with suspicion by the Judean Christians he had formerly persecuted, Paul made several missionary journeys throughout the Mediterranean, to his Anatolian homeland, then to Greece, and eventually to Rome. Paul was among the first and was certainly the most significant early Christian figure to convert non-Jews to the new religion. Paul's letters to the Christian congregations he had formed in various Mediterranean cities came to make up a large part of the Christian New Testament, and the Christian movement as a whole absorbed his message of egalitarianism and his arguments against Jewish exclusivity. In fact, Paul's writings against Jews and Judaism came to form the basis of a centuries-long Christian polemical (i.e., attacking) literature that described Jews as a wayward people who had lost the favor of God. Paul and the other proponents of this tradition argued, naturally, that God's favor was now extended to Christians, no matter their

hereditary origins. To the Christians in one city in Asia Minor, for instance, Paul wrote that "all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Paul and his imitators thus claimed the ancient inheritance of the Jews for their contemporary Christians, while casting contemporary Jews as fallen enemies of God.

The Jewish rebellion against Rome that culminated in the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE produced a permanent, unbridgeable rift between Judaism and its daughter religion of Christianity. For Christians, this cataclysm was merely proof that God's favor had indeed been withdrawn from the Jews, and Christians incorporated that evidence into their polemic. Bereft of their ritual center and stripped of the ability to command their own political destiny (and even mostly prohibited from living in their ancestral homeland after later unsuccessful rebellions), the Jews of the succeeding centuries reconfigured their religion to focus on the religious authority of the rabbis and the religious practices of the synagogue rather than the rituals of the now-defunct temple. Rabbinic Judaism, as it was called, redefined and reconfigured itself using Christians as a counter example, causing the divide between the two religions to grow even wider. Final authority in Judaism came to reside in the Talmud, a massive compendium of commentaries on the Bible (and commentaries on the commentaries) that was compiled between the fourth and eighth centuries CE. Rabbis spent years mastering this essential text, though its size and complexity led to many different schools of interpretation throughout the centuries.

Both Christians and Jews established congregations throughout the Roman Empire over the second and third centuries and lived in relative peace with their pagan neighbors. On only a few occasions do attitudes about Christians shine through in Roman texts. In the early second century, Pliny the Younger, Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, informed the emperor Trajan about a group of Christians he had arrested in his province. Unsure of what to make of a group who worshiped a man executed by the Romans for fomenting rebellion, Pliny sought the advice of the emperor, who recommended execution out of a practical concern for safety. Other figures during the empire offered criticism of Christianity on philosophical and even moral grounds, but the overwhelming reaction to Christianity among Romans was one of complacency tinged with bafflement. Roman officials did occasionally single out Christians for criticism or persecution, but such attention was relatively uncommon before the reign of Diocletian, a pivotal figure to whom we now turn our attention.

The Dominate

The Crisis of the Third Century exposed serious weaknesses in the political and economic systems of the Roman Empire. If Rome was to survive, it needed fundamental reform. Shockingly, this was provided by Diocletian, a military commander who fit the profile of many of the short-lived emperors of the Third Century Crisis. Crowned in 285, he recognized that he needed allies if he was going to survive the seemingly inevitable threat of imperial intrigue and assassination, so he formed a partnership with another general, Maximianus. The partners agreed to share rule of the empire, with Diocletian ascendant in the east (where his loyal legions were located) and Maximianus taking power in the west. Moreover, both emperors then allied with junior partners--Constantius in the west and Galerius in the east--who took over rule of roughly half of the land in the respective halves of the empire, thus dividing the empire into four semi-

autonomous political units. The senior emperors, Diocletian and Maximianus, took the title of "Augustus," and the junior emperors took the title of "Caesar." As Diocletian envisioned it, this system would solve the problem of succession, as a "Caesar" would assume the Augustus position upon the death or abdication of the reigning "Augustus." This division of the imperial power was called the Tetrarchy ("rule of four").

The creation of the Tetrarchy was only the beginning of Diocletian's political and economic reforms. Rome had traditionally rejected the expansion of the central government, relying on Senators and Equestrians (the social grouping just below the Senators) to fill governor positions and otherwise allowing Romanized native elites to exercise most of the power on the local level. Third century emperors had stripped away local power, especially in frontier regions, placing it increasingly in the hands of military commanders, but Diocletian and his partners took the extra step of dissolving old provincial structures and establishing new administrative units, along with a much larger imperial bureaucracy beholden directly to the Tetrarchy. Though this increased the size of the public sector exponentially, it made important tasks like tax collection more effective.

Ironically, as Diocletian and the other members of the tetrarchy were sharing power, both with each other and with a larger group of government officials, they were also changing the public perception of the emperor to make it far more grand than had been the case during the reigns of earlier emperors. Unlike Augustus Caesar, for instance, who lived in a fairly modest apartment, dressed like other senators, and made himself accessible to the Roman public, the members of the Tetrarchy began to model themselves after Persian emperors in wearing elaborate royal robes, instituting complex political rituals, insisting on proskynesis (prostration in the ruler's presence) from their subjects, and cutting themselves off from the public in grand palaces. On the rare occasions when they held public audiences, according to some sources at least, they wore particularly sumptuous robes, replete with gold and jewels, and sprinkled gold dust in their hair to make them appear divine. Also unlike Augustus, who preferred the title "princeps" and promoted his personal cult only in the eastern Mediterranean, the members of the Tetrarchy insisted upon being called "dominus et deus" (lord and god) and required strict adherence to the imperial cult as a matter of course. The imperial government created by Diocletian and copied by his successors is thus called the "Dominate," as distinguished from the "Principate" formed by Augustus.

Diocletian introduced reforms in areas outside of the political system, though these met with mixed success. He focused the attention of the military on defending the frontier regions, increasing the size and strength of garrisons and fortifications. He and the other members of the Tetrarchy also ruled from frontier cities like Nicomedia, Trier, Sirmium, and Milan, where they could supervise military operations more effectively due to close proximity. This trend continued under later emperors in the Dominate era and served to marginalize the city of Rome itself, at least in terms of political clout. Economically, Diocletian sought to combat growing inflation by imposing price ceilings on goods and services throughout the empire (in the "Edict on Maximum Prices"), thinking erroneously that inflation was due simply to the greed of merchants and craftsmen. This effort violated the basic laws of supply and demand (of which Diocletian was ignorant) and thus led both to massive shortages of food and other items and to the development of a robust black market. At the same time, his tax increases, necessary for the expansion of the army and the government bureaucracy, damaged the economy even further.

To distract the Roman public from the continuing problems of the empire, Diocletian famously ordered and directed the mass arrest and execution of Christians. The reign of

Diocletian is thus coterminous with what Christians call the "Great Persecution." While Diocletian was not the first emperor to order the persecution of Christians (Nero and Trajan, among others, were also quite famous for this), few previous emperors had taken notice of the still-obscure religious group and at least one (Severus Alexander) appears to have admired Jesus enough to venerate him alongside other deities. After first dismissing Christians from the army and other Roman institutions, Diocletian and other members of the tetrarchy, Galerius in particular, issued a series of edicts that first stripped protections (promised by previous emperors) away from the Christians and then demanded that they venerate the traditional Roman gods, with severe punishments for those who refused to abide by the edicts. The edicts were not applied or enforced equally by all members of the tetrarchy--Constantius was particularly unenthusiastic, perhaps setting an example for his son Constantine, while Galerius was easily the most ruthless enforcer. Christian historians, particularly Eusebius, would later write lengthy, graphic accounts of the persecutions, and the example of martyrdom set by those who were executed for their refusal to make sacrifices to the Roman gods would become a template of Christian sanctity for some time. Ultimately, the persecutions did little to check the growth of Christianity, and in fact it served to crystallize the unity and commitment of many Christians.

Constantine and his Successors

Diocletian abdicated the throne in 305, probably by arrangement with Galerius, his Caesar, but also to ensure that the system of succession created by the tetrarchy would function smoothly. Although Maximianus, the other Augustus, was not necessarily ready to abdicate, he did so under pressure from Diocletian. Diocletian retired to a country estate to watch the system he had created fall to pieces within a few years. The trouble began when Constantius, the newly-ascendant western Augustus, died in 306 after only a few months in his new position. The legions loyal to Constantius refused to recognize the succession claim of the new western Caesar and instead proclaimed the son of Constantius--Constantine--as the new Augustus. This touched off a series of wars between Constantine and the other members, or would-be members, of the tetrarchy. Ultimately, Constantine emerged from these wars as the sole emperor of Rome, although he did see the wisdom in continuing with many of the reforms of Diocletian, even dividing the empire into parts and sharing some power with his sons.

Like Diocletian, Constantine introduced a number of reforms to the political and economic systems of the empire; these reforms fostered the adaptability necessary for the empire to continue to thrive but also made Rome more autocratic. Militarily, he reformed the army, moving away from the static frontier garrisons favored by Diocletian and instead creating mobile field armies inside Roman territory who could respond quickly to crises wherever they occurred. He also reformed the coinage and relieved some of the inflationary pressure that had bedeviled the efforts of Diocletian. More significantly, he founded and poured resources into a new city in the eastern empire that would eventually become a second and far more viable imperial capital. Built over an old Greek polis known as Byzantium and chosen by Constantine for its location on the Dardanelles, its proximity to frontier armies, and its defensibility, Constantinople grew quickly, thanks to the heavy investment of Constantine and his successors. As had been the case for Rome in earlier centuries, the emperors and other prominent men provided the money and resources necessary to build roads, aqueducts, cisterns, and, most importantly, defensive walls on the landward side of the city (the water surrounding three sides of the city made the other parts highly defensible). Lured by guarantees of free land and enhanced power, many prominent

families from Italy and other parts of the empire immigrated to Constantinople, and Constantine founded an eastern Senate to rival the now-ancient Roman institution. Within a generation, Constantinople was effectively functioning as an imperial capital, and its rise constituted one of the key markers of the growing political divide between the eastern and western empires, a division that would become permanent by the end of the fourth century.

Constantine's most significant contribution to Roman history and to western civilization at large was his embrace of the Christian faith, a decision that reverberated over many centuries. His reasons for doing so are unclear. According to later Christian legends, Constantine saw a vision on the eve of a key conflict--the Battle of Milvian Bridge (312) which enabled him to take control of the city of Rome. In this vision, Constantine saw a Christian symbol (either a cross or the Chi-Rho symbol) in the sky and heard a voice proclaim, "By this you shall conquer." After placing the symbol on his battle standards, Constantine won the battle and thus ascribed some of his success to the Christian God. Shortly after this battle, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which decreed tolerance throughout his empire for all Christians. In truth, Constantine was not the first to issue such an edict--the eastern Augustus Galerius, formerly the greatest enemy of Christianity had made a similar decree two years previously--but this was not the end of Constantine's investment in Christianity.

It is difficult to know the level of Constantine's personal commitment to the Christian God; he continued to adhere to other religious forms and to pay homage to other deities, may have conflated Jesus with the popular deity Sol Invictus ("unconquered sun"), and was only baptized as a Christian at the very end of his life. Yet he also put a great deal of effort into the advancement of Christianity. Seeing the lack of unity and uniformity in the beliefs and practices of Christianity, Constantine sought to standardize the faith. To this end, he convened a council of Christian bishops (heads of local Christian congregations) in the city of Nicaea in 325. This was the first in a long history of general councils of the Christian church (the most recent being the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s). Debates raged at this meeting over such core tenets of the faith as the nature of God, over such vital practices as the proper observance of Easter, and over the shape of essential institutions like the canon of the New Testament. Though the pronouncements of the Council of Nicaea did lay down the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and other essential components of the faith, these decisions were not met with universal assent. Groups of Christians continued to adhere to alternate versions of Christianity and were thus labeled as heresy by Orthodox authorities. Perhaps the most important of these were the Arians, followers of Arius, a proponent of anti-Trinitarian teachings whose writings were condemned by the Council of Nicaea. The Arian sect remained successful for more than three centuries, claiming several Roman emperors as adherents, as well as the vast majority of the Germanic populations who began to stream into the empire in the late fourth century.

Constantine's successors precipitated the trends begun by the early emperors of the Dominate. Although Constantine himself did not accept anyone as an equal partner in rule, he did divide the empire into administrative units--over which his sons ruled as Caesars--that were roughly coterminous with the four divisions laid out by Diocletian. This had the particular effect of precipitating the partition between the eastern and western empires, a division that was exacerbated by the emergence of Constantinople as an eastern political capital. Theodosius (ruled 379-395) was the last emperor to rule singularly over the unified empire, and he effectively made the east-west division permanent when he bequeathed the eastern empire to his older son Arcadius and the western empire to his younger son Honorius. Only during the reign of

Justinian, a century and a half later, did subsequent Roman emperors make a serious attempt to reunite the two parts of the empire.

Beginning with Constantine, the Roman emperors were all Christian, with one exception. Julian (called "the Apostate" by Christian authors) converted back to the ancestral, polytheistic Roman religion, despite being raised as a Christian. After his conversion, he attempted to strip some of the privileges from the Christian church and might have turned back the political tide of the religion had he not died in battle only two years into his reign. Other fourth-century emperors, including Constantine II, son of Constantine the Great, ascribed to the Arian form of Christianity, but their commitment to the faith was generally never in doubt. At the end of the fourth century, Theodosius effectively made Christianity the official religion of the empire by granting Christians permission to tear down pagan temples and to use the building materials to construct Christian churches. While there were still a large number of pagans remaining, especially among the patricians, the religious tide was firmly in the favor of Christianity. This did not radically alter the political and social balance in the empire, however, as converted patricians tended simply to move into positions of authority within the church. In many cases over the fifth and sixth centuries, church institutions took over many of the functions formerly exercised by the Roman government, particularly in the west, but this merely meant that the same patrician families were fulfilling many of the same tasks as in earlier centuries. They were performing these functions as bishops and other church officials instead of as governmental officials, but the cast of characters remained largely the same.

Church Fathers and the Development of Christianity

The empire's embrace of Christianity ensured the growth and continued success of Christianity, but it also created a number of identity crises within the Christian movement. Previous to Constantine, Christians had been a small but very committed minority community within the broader structure of the Roman empire. The periodic persecutions and particularly the so-called Great Persecution of the Diocletian era had led many Christians to adopt a martyr mentality; that is, martyrdom in defense of one's belief in and commitment to Christ was considered by many to be the surest path to heaven, the ideal path that a devout Christian should follow. A large majority of Christian saints--figures venerated because of their heroic or miraculous deeds--from the first three centuries of Christian history were martyrs. For these early Christians, Jesus himself was the ultimate example of martyrdom. After Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313 and made Christianity a legal, tolerated religion, however, opportunities for pursuing this ideal life of martyrdom became scarce, at least for those Christians who adhered to the Orthodox Christianity supported by imperial and church authorities. Bereft of their dominant model of sanctity, Christians either formulated new modes of belief and practice or emphasized preexisting modes that had previously been overshadowed by the ideal of martyrdom. As no single Christian option was accepted by all of the steadily-growing number of adherents to the faith, this reformulation of Christianity served to fracture the movement even further. An thorough exploration of these developments extends beyond the scope of this textbook, so this discussion will confine itself to three major points.

First, as has already been mentioned, many Christians refused to accept the decrees of the Nicene and other church councils and instead insisted on pursuing their own Christian path. The martyr mentality of early Christianity contributed to the intransigence of these groups who came to be considered heretics by the Roman church. They continued to seek martyrdom by defying

the Orthodox Christian majority, even declaring as a type of counter-strike that the Orthodox positions were heretical and that they alone practiced the proper Christian lifestyle. One of these groups, the Donatists of North Africa, declared that all Christians who had compromised their commitments in any way during the earlier persecutions had invalidated their identity as Christians and that only those who accepted and sought martyrdom were true believers. In their minds, the baptisms and other sacraments performed by Orthodox priests were invalid because there were many among the ranks of priests who had betrayed the true faith. Such teachings fractured the church of North Africa into two camps, and similar divisions appeared elsewhere due to disagreements over a variety of doctrinal and practical points. Since many continued to operate under the martyr mentality of early Christianity, these divisions were welcome and necessary in that they offered continued opportunities for martyrdom. For the heretics, healing the divisions was thus not a priority. Even with the protection and sponsorship of the imperial apparatus, or perhaps because of it, the Christian movement remained fundamentally divided. This fractured condition would persist all through the Middle Ages, though acuteness of division and the divisive issues and identities of the various camps changed over time.

A second important trend in Christianity during this period was the rise of monasticism. Though the origins of this movement stretch back to the third century before the great persecutions of Diocletian, the growing popularity of this form of Christian life in the fourth and fifth centuries also stems at least partly from Christianity's attempt to reckon with its own history as an underground movement and the new reality of imperial sponsorship. The earliest monastic figures were hermits like St. Anthony of Egypt, who left his comfortable life to observe a solitary regimen of prayer and meditation in the desert. These "desert fathers" often went to extremes to demonstrate their commitment to God--St. Simeon "the Stylite," for instance, legendarily lived on top of a desert pillar for thirty years, relying entirely on the mercy of God and his fellow Christians for his sustenance--and their reputation for sanctity grew as stories about their heroic spiritual feats spread. To some extent, this desire for the life of the hermit represented a reckoning with the persistent desire for martyrdom. If devout Christians could no longer obtain actual martyrdom with ease, they instead sought to become living martyrs by denying themselves of the normal comforts of life: food and water, shelter, human companionship, and sex. However, their reputation attracted not only imitators but significant groups of Christians who simply wanted to bask in the presence of and receive guidance from the holy figures; thus communities of Christians seeking to live the sanctified life--the first Christian monasteries--formed around those with reputations for holiness. The leaders of monastic communities began to formulate guidelines for their followers, even providing precise instructions for the daily regimen of their "brothers and sisters." These guidelines were set down in texts known simply as "rules" (Latin *regulae*). The most influential of these "rules" was the one written by the sixth-century monk Benedict of Nursia, who founded the famous Monte Cassino monastery in Italy in 530. Benedict's Rule organized the monastery under the leadership of an "abbot," enjoined monks to cultivate absolute obedience, humility, and chastity, and divided the monastic day into roughly equal periods of prayer, work, and sleep. While the guidelines of the Benedictine Rule seem austere to modern sensibilities, it was in fact quite moderate compared to some of the earlier rules. This moderation may explain its long-lasting appeal. Benedict's Rule became the governing document of most monasteries in the Latin-speaking West during the early Middle Ages, thus forming a network of communities known as the Benedictine Order. This Order of monks remained one of the most influential institutions in Europe throughout the Middle Ages,

though it was later challenged for supremacy by new orders that emerged in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The third and arguably most significant development in late antique Christianity involved the remarkable intellectual achievements of the figures known as the "church fathers." Between the second and sixth centuries, these influential writers formulated, defined, and codified the doctrines, practices, and organization of the orthodox Christian church. Working mostly from positions within the institutional churches--most were either bishops of abbots of monasteries, though a few were hermits or simple monks--these figures laid down what it meant to be a Christian and to practice Christianity. In the process, they also identified and characterized the opponents of Christianity, particularly Jews and heretics. Their myriad writings, copied and recopied in manuscript form for centuries, would populate the shelves of monastic and cathedral libraries throughout the Middle Ages. The church fathers in the Eastern Mediterranean wrote mostly in Greek, and their writings thus form the theological and liturgical basis of Greek Orthodox Christianity. Among the most influential Greek fathers were Basil the Great (c.329-379), Athanasius (c.296-373), Gregory of Nazianzus (329-c.389), and John Chrysostom (347-407). For the development of western, Latin Christianity, the so-called "Four Doctors" of the church are the most influential. These figures wrote mostly in Latin and included the so-called "four doctors" of the Western Church:

> **Ambrose of Milan** (c.340-397): Born into an elite Roman family and educated in literature, law, and rhetoric, Ambrose served as governor of a region of northern Italy before being named bishop of Milan in 374 (despite being neither trained in theology nor baptized as a Christian at the time of his election). Ambrose is thus an excellent example of the aforementioned trend of elite Roman officials taking up key positions in the church. Over the course of more than two decades as the bishop of Milan, he wrote dozens of works in a variety of genres--sermons, letters, biblical commentaries, hymns, theological treatises, etc.--on the doctrines, practices, and government of the Christian church. He sought to combat the influence of Arianism and other heresies both in his diocese and in the broader empire. His behavior as a bishop came to serve as a model for others holding this essential church office. In 390, he even excommunicated the emperor Theodosius I, who had ordered the massacre of 7000 inhabitants of Thessalonica in retribution for a riot that had killed the provincial governor there. After Ambrose admitted him back into full church communion, Theodosius (presumably at Ambrose's prompting) went on to issue several decrees that outlawed pagan practices and gave greater privileges to the Christian church.
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> **Jerome** (c.347-420): A sometime desert ascetic who spent various parts of his life in Antioch, Rome, Palestine, and Egypt, Jerome mastered not only Latin and Greek, but also Hebrew, in an effort to understand the Old Testament in its original language. Armed with these linguistic abilities, Jerome accomplished a new, authoritative translation of the Bible into Latin, the Old Testament from Hebrew and the New Testament from Greek, at the behest of Pope Damasus I. Over time, this version, known as the *Vulgate* because of the simplicity of its Latin, came to replace the existing Latin versions of the Bible (the *Vetus Latina* or "Old Latin" translations) which were riddled with translation errors. Jerome also wrote many influential works of theology that became standard reading for monks and other Christian clergy in the western, Latin church.

Augustine of Hippo: The intellectual who towers over the entire period of Late Antiquity, Augustine was arguably both the most significant Christian theologian after Paul of Tarsus and the most important philosopher since Plato. Born to a pagan father and a Christian mother, Augustine explored several intellectual and religious paths before arriving at Catholic Christianity; he detailed his quest for truth in his *Confessions*, demonstrating in the process the varied religious landscape of the era. Influenced in particular by Ambrose, whom he met while a teacher of rhetoric in Milan, Augustine converted to Catholic Christianity in his early thirties, but he took with him his love for and comprehensive knowledge of both classical Latin literature and Platonic philosophy (mostly via the neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus). Author of more than a hundred works, Augustine wrote on nearly every conceivable theological topic, establishing himself as the authoritative voice on Christian doctrine, practice, and organization for the next millennium or more. Apart from his *Confessions*, his most influential work was his *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos* ("On the City of God against the Pagans"), a synopsis of both secular and religious history written in response to pagan accusations that the Christians were to blame for the Visigothic sack of Rome in 410. In this text, Augustine propounds a linear view of history, rejecting the cyclical view that had prevailed among classical historians like Herodotus and Livy. In Augustine's view, God was the primary driver of history, so even catastrophic events like the sack of Rome should not excite too much concern since they happened according to divine will and with a divine purpose. Augustine fused Christian theology together with Platonic philosophy and classical rhetoric, ensuring that the Greco-Roman cultural legacy would remain a fundamental part of western culture in the medieval Christian era.

Gregory the Great: The only one of the "four doctors" who served as pope (r. 590-604), Gregory also wrote extensively on a wide variety of theological, liturgical, and ecclesiological topics. His reform of the liturgy of the church is particularly notable. His term as pope established a kind of template for future popes to follow: an expansive, continent-wide church run directly from Rome with multiple ongoing projects. The ambitious popes from the high Middle Ages to the modern era have all operated in the spirit of Gregory. Among his other accomplishments, he is particularly known and renowned for organizing a mission to the Anglo-Saxon peoples who had conquered the British Isles in the previous century, the first large-scale effort of its kind ordered directly from Rome. This effort succeeded in transforming the religious identity not only of Britain but also of much of northern Europe as offshoots of the original mission extended Christianity to other pagan peoples.

In summary, the church fathers were the chief architects of the fusion of the Roman, Christian, and Germanic cultural legacies that collectively constitute the worldview of the Middle Ages. They were largely responsible for creating a European continent unified by Christianity (hence the long-standing label "Christendom" or *Christianitas* in Latin) and the classical heritage. They were also the primary builders of the doctrines, practices, and government of the Catholic ("universal") church that dominated religious life and influenced politics in western Europe for over a millennium. The intellectual, cultural, and political contribution of the church fathers thus runs deep in Western Civilization.

Germanic Migrations and Kingdoms

Popular conceptions of history speak of the Germanic "barbarian invasions" of the fifth century that caused the "fall" of Rome (in the west, at least). This assigns intentionality to the Germanic peoples that is inaccurate at best. The peoples whom the Romans called "Germans" or "barbarians" did not act in concert and did not move into Roman territory in order to destroy the Empire, nor were the migrations that augmented the fragmentation of the western empire a new or sudden phenomenon. The area to the northeast of the empire--a region the Romans called *Germania*--was home to a diverse array of peoples, many of whom had longstanding relationships with Rome. With the exception of central Asian nomadic peoples who occasionally traversed the area (the Huns being the most recognizable group of these nomads) these inhabitants were settled agriculturalists for the most part. They spoke Germanic languages but were not necessarily the direct ancestors of modern Germans. Political leadership was fluid; most Germanic peoples lived in small groups in isolated agricultural settlements, but they might also band together in temporary alliances under the leadership of warrior chieftains, especially if threatened by Roman or nomadic incursions into their territories. Some of these chieftains entered into treaty relationships with the Romans, becoming clients of the empire, and they and their men were tasked with providing a military buffer along the borders of Rome in exchange for privileges within the empire. The Romans were long acquainted with these Germanic peoples, but their unflattering impressions and depictions of the Germans--as, for instance, in the *Germania* of the historian Tacitus--should be understood more as a creative fiction and as a critical comparison with Roman institutions and values than as objective, authentic accounts.

The most certain thing we can say about these Germanic peoples is that many of them immigrated into the Roman empire over the centuries, seeking peace and economic opportunity in much the same way as refugees and economic migrants from developing countries have attempted to migrate to Europe and the United States in the modern world. Unfortunately, opportunities were not always forthcoming, and many Germanic immigrants ended up as slaves to Roman masters. This trickle of migrants increased to a steady flow in the third century, prompting the military emperors of that period to incorporate more and more Germans into the army. This seemed a convenient solution to the difficulty of recruiting soldiers from among the Roman population. Over time, more and more of the empire's army, including much of its officer corps, came to be made of men of Germanic origin. In some cases, army units followed Germanic rather than Roman systems of organization. Starting in the second half of the fourth century, nomadic invasions north of the Danube and probably other disasters like famines and disease outbreaks prompted more and more Germanic peoples to seek safety and opportunity inside Rome, and the weakening of imperial institutions, especially in the western empire, made it difficult for Romans to control the flow of immigration. This volatile mix of factors led to significant political and social upheaval in the fifth and sixth centuries, culminating in the fragmentation of the western empire and the establishment of kingdoms ruled by Germanic monarchs.

This process of political transformation began in the 370s, when a group of Huns (again, nomadic horsemen from central Asia) invaded the region to the north of the Black Sea. Like other parts of *Germania*, this region was dotted with agricultural settlements. Threatened by the Huns, however, the inhabitants banded together under the leadership of military chieftains, culminating in the formation of two major groups who came to be called Ostrogoths (eastern

Goths) and Visigoths (western Goths). Retreating from the upheaval to the east, the Visigoths massed on the northern side of the Danube River in the Roman province of Dacia (modern Romania). Their leaders sent messengers to Valens, the eastern emperor, asking for permission to settle their people in Roman territory and demanding Roman military rank for themselves. While the Romans were accustomed to dealing with Germanic immigrants, they had never been asked to resettle a large group *en masse*, and Valens, probably due to indecision, hesitated a bit too long. While they were waiting for the emperor's response, the Visigoths were gradually starving, having been offered only rotting food at exorbitant prices by Roman merchants and otherwise cheated and misled by Roman officials. Desperate, the Visigoths forced their way across the Danube and began to pillage the countryside. Valens led an army to cut off their march through the eastern empire, but his forces were defeated and the emperor killed at the Battle of Adrianople in 378. Theodosius I, who followed Valens, managed to integrate the Goths partially into the Roman population by allying politically with their leaders and incorporating more of their people into the Roman army. However, this integration was only partial, as the Goths retained their loyalty to their native leaders, some of whom became important political figures in the fifth century empire.

After the death of Theodosius I, the main body of the Visigoths moved to the west under the leadership of Alaric. Their attempts to seize territory in Italy were initially thwarted by Stilicho, the general of Germanic origin who commanded the Roman military in the west. Convinced by jealous, suspicious senators that Stilicho intended to betray the empire and enter into an alliance with Alaric, however, the western emperor Honorius ordered Stilicho's execution. Without Stilicho's able leadership, the Romans could muster no one capable of dealing militarily or diplomatically with the Visigothic threat, and Alaric's troops marched down the peninsula and sacked the city of Rome in 410. While this was certainly shocking to the Romans, given their centuries-long aura of invincibility, it sounds much more dreadful than it actually was. The Visigoths were Christian and respected the Christian identity and topography of Rome, spending only three days in the city and leaving the rich churches of the city alone. As agriculturists in search of productive farmland, their desired destination was North Africa. Their lack of maritime knowledge prevented them from crossing the Mediterranean, however, and they eventually made their way to Gaul and then Iberia, where they established an independent kingdom.

The Visigoths were not the only Germanic group to make an incursion into the western empire in this period. The Vandals also moved into Roman territory around 400, perhaps fleeing from groups of Huns or perhaps as part of a purposeful invasion organized by a Roman client. They passed through Gaul and settled in Iberia, only to be driven to North Africa by the advance of Alaric's Visigoths. Their seizure of farmland in North Africa and their eventual involvement in Mediterranean piracy disrupted the supply of grain to Italy, prompting a rapid depopulation of Rome in the sixth century. The Ostrogoths, under the leadership of their king Theoderic, conquered Italy in the 490s, defeating Odoacer, the Germanic general of Rome who had removed from power and executed the last of the western Roman emperors, Romulus Augustulus, in 476. The other important Germanic group to set themselves up as rulers on former Roman territory were the Franks, under the leadership of Clovis, founder of the Merovingian Dynasty that ruled most of what would become modern France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany for two and half centuries.

The long and short of all of this fragmentation is that the western Roman empire came to be replaced geographically and politically by a set of kingdoms ruled by Germanic kings. Some

of these kingdoms were short-lived and unstable while others, the Frankish in particular, were long-lasting. Though this transformation has often been understood as tragedy, disaster, or "fall," more recent historians have noted that these changes invigorated the crumbling western empire and produced a governmental system that was far more effective than the Roman one had been in the previous decades. In several respects, these kingdoms represented a continuation of Rome. For one, the kingdoms held populations made up predominantly of Romans, including large numbers who had obtained Roman citizenship in blanket imperial declarations of the third and fourth centuries. The Roman infrastructure of roads, bridges, aqueducts, cisterns, plumbing, and other components were a vital part of the lives of these inhabitants. Their new German overlords endeavored to keep these amenities in place, recognizing that the effective Roman infrastructure would contribute to the prosperity of their kingdoms as it had for their Roman predecessors. The division of the empire into independent kingdoms did compromise the infrastructure to some extent--the disruption in the food trade between North Africa and Italy is one prominent example--but the Germanic kings attempted to keep existing structures in place and to shore up crumbling institutions.

A second reason for positing the continuation of Rome is that the new German masters of western Europe were almost invariably Romanized to one extent or another, and some of them became more so over time. The Frankish king Clovis is a good example. Not only did he convert to Christianity (the Catholic as opposed to the Arian version--a choice that would be important for the future course of western Europe), but he also tried to establish a close alliance with the emperor in Constantinople and was thrilled when the emperor Anastasius I bestowed the title of consul upon him after his victory over the Visigoths in southern Gaul. Evincing a far greater level of Romanization was Theoderic, the Ostrogothic king who defeated Odoacer and ruled Italy in the late fifth century. Theoderic spent his adolescent years in the imperial court at Constantinople, a hostage (though a privileged one) under the terms of a treaty between his father and the eastern emperor. He was an ally of the emperors Leo I and Zeno and held high positions in the empire, including the rank of consul. It was at the behest of Zeno that Theoderic invaded Italy; after his conquest of the peninsula he was technically the viceroy for the emperor, though Theoderic was independent of all supervision from Constantinople. It is almost certain that he intended to overthrow the eastern emperor and claim the imperial title for himself, but he was never able to bring that ambition to realization. He was a very effective ruler of Italy, however, and the city of Rome enjoyed greater prosperity than it had in over a century during his reign.

The Early Byzantine Empire

The third and final reason to emphasize the continuation rather than the fall of Rome is that the eastern empire remained intact and even reached new heights in the sixth century under the rule of emperors in Constantinople. Apart from Rome, the most important cities of the empire--Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria among them--were in the east, and Rome's urban based empire, always most stable and prosperous in the east, remained intact there. From Constantine's foundation of the city that bore his name, to Theodosius's decision to grant the eastern empire to his older and more capable son (leaving the west to languish under his younger heir), to the pivotal sixth-century reign of Justinian, the city of Constantinople--*Roma nova* or "New Rome"--gradually came to eclipse the political, cultural, and economic primacy of the eternal city. So important was this city to the surviving eastern empire that nineteenth-century

scholars called this entity the "Byzantine Empire," a misnomer that was drawn from the previous name of Constantinople (Byzantium) and that had no real basis in historical reality. Inhabitants of Constantinople or of the territories it dominated through nearly a millennium of history certainly did not think of themselves as "Byzantines" but rather as "Romans."

The most important emperor subsequent to Constantine the Great--and the quintessential ruler of the early Byzantine Empire--was Justinian. Emerging from peasant stock and rising through the ranks of the army, Justinian ascended to the throne in 527, succeeding his uncle Justin, who had also risen from humble origins. Justinian reigned until 565, attempting during his long reign to bring about a *renovatio imperii* ("restoration of empire"). In doing so, he built upon the accomplishments of the fifth-century eastern emperors who had consolidated their rule by playing both external and internal enemies off against each other, but Justinian showed a great deal of initiative and creativity in his own right. Part of his success must be credited to his ambitious wife Theodora, a former actress whose origins and erstwhile profession were scandalous to at least some if not many of Justinian's courtiers. Indeed, both Justinian and Theodora are shrouded in some mystery, since the lengthiest accounts of their reign were all written by the historian Procopius, a one-time advisor to Justinian's chief general Belisarius. While two of Procopius's works about Justinian (the *Wars* and the *Buildings*) celebrate the life and accomplishments (especially the military conquests and ambitious construction projects) of the emperor, a third work--the *Secret History*--is a master work of invective and character assassination. This work, which was seemingly never meant for distribution, depicts Justinian as a demon-possessed ruler in thrall to his sorceress wife (whose voracious sexual appetites and other character flaws are narrated with some gusto). Whether this work represented Procopius's true opinion of Justinian is a matter of some debate, but whatever the truth its existence muddies the historical picture of this pivotal ruler.

Justinian's rule was contested early by Roman senators who likely objected to having an emperor from peasant origins on the throne. These privileged opponents fomented the so-called Nika Revolt in 532 by spreading rumors of the emperor's loyalty to a particular chariot racing team. These rumors precipitated a riot in the hippodrome that threatened to engulf the imperial palace; nearly every major building in the city--including most of the churches--were put to the torch by rioters. Only at Theodora's insistence did Justinian remain in Constantinople, but his decision to remain proved decisive as Belisarius managed to quell the riot and arrest the senatorial conspirators, executing the senator who had been put forward to replace Justinian in the process. Eliminating his rivals in this fashion gave Justinian uncontested power, as the other potential objectors to his ruler were cowed by the emperor's brutal suppression of the Nika Revolt. From this position of strength, Justinian pursued the projects that make his reign one of the most successful and productive in Roman history.

Perhaps the longest-lasting of all of Justinian's accomplishments came in the realm of jurisprudence. Building upon the codification of Roman law attempted by Theodosius at the end of the fourth century, legal scholars at the court of Justinian collected, organized, and codified several centuries of Roman legal materials: imperial decrees (collected in the *Codex Justinianus*) and writings of Roman jurists (assembled in the *Digest*). These legal scholars also produced a work called the *Institutes*, a kind of textbook for the training of Roman jurists and officials. These three collections, together with an open-canon collection of new imperial decrees (i.e., the *Novellae*) came to be known collectively as the *Corpus Juris Civilis*. This work was distributed throughout the empire, including Italy after the Byzantine reconquest of that peninsula. It remained the basis of the legal systems of the eastern Christian world throughout the Middle

Ages, influencing the emerging laws of the Slavic peoples in the process. While its influence on the western, Latin part of Christendom was minimal during the early Middle Ages, its rediscovery in Italy during the eleventh century produced a revolution of both church and secular law, the influence of which endured for centuries. Indeed, the legal systems of most modern European nations owe a substantial debt to the *Corpus Juris Civilis*. The work is without doubt one of the most influential in all of western civilization.

Although the unification of the Roman empire remained an ideal throughout the Middle Ages--this ideal served as a motivation for the Crusades, for instance--Justinian was the last ancient emperor to attempt reunification. As several Germanic groups had taken control of the various parts of the western empire, this attempted reunification amounted to attempted reconquest. Under the command of Belisarius, Justinian's army first ousted the Visigoths from North Africa, in order to secure the valuable agricultural lands of that region. The initial reconquest went very well for Belisarius, who captured major cities like Carthage with some ease. However, the Roman hold on the region proved tenuous, as Berber insurgents from the interior continually raided coastal settlements; combatting these insurgents required troops and other resources that Justinian had intended to use in reconquering other areas. With part of his army still bogged down in North Africa, Justinian sent Belisarius to fight the Ostrogoths in Italy. This proved more difficult than the campaign against the Vandals. Renewed war with the Sassanids in the east, rivalries among generals, and the continued struggle in North Africa all hampered the reconquest of Italy. The worst blow to Justinian's ambitions, however, came in the form of a massive outbreak of disease--probably bubonic plague--beginning in 542. Perhaps the worst pandemic in world history previous to the Black Death of the fourteenth century, this disaster killed perhaps a fourth or even a third of the empire's population, thus decreasing significantly both the manpower and tax revenue Justinian might have drawn upon to reunify the empire. Though Roman armies ultimately took control of most of Italy after decades of fighting--and though the provincial capital of Ravenna became an important center of cultural production--Justinian's dreams of a fully reunified empire died with millions of plague victims.

With the destruction of much of Constantinople in the Nika Revolt of 532, Justinian was afforded an opportunity to rebuild the city on a grander scale and thus leave a lasting architectural stamp on the capital. While several notable churches and other buildings bore Justinian's mark, the most important was the Hagia Sophia, a massive church built in an entirely original architectural design. Such was Justinian's intention for the central church in his building program, for he hired two mathematicians, Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles, to design the building according to geometric principles rather than rely on contemporary architectural norms. The designers modified the standard basilica model (a raised central aisle with shorter side aisles) and added circles and curves in the form of domes, half domes, and horseshoes to the standard straight lines. They capped the building with a gigantic dome that rests on a bank of windows. Light entering through these windows gives the impression that the dome is floating, and the light from dozens of additional windows bounces around the nave, producing both awe and disorientation in the worshipers. This building remained the central church of the Greek Orthodox religion until the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Its architectural influence is inestimable.

Ruling by a governing philosophy of *caesaropapism* (rule over both church and secular government), Justinian took the Byzantine empire to its greatest political and cultural heights and established a pattern of rule for later emperors to follow. He may have overextended the empire, however, as his projects required a tremendous amount of resources. By the end of Justinian's

reign, Turkic and Slavic peoples were threatening the Balkans, and an emboldened Sassanid Empire was once again on the rise in the east. Most of Italy was lost to Germanic groups shortly after Justinian's death, though the empire did maintain control of Rome and Ravenna for nearly two centuries.

The generally unfavorable trends that led to the diminution of the Byzantine Empire may be encapsulated by the reign of the emperor Heraclius (r. 610-641). A usurper who overthrew Phocas, the previous emperor, Heraclius ruled over an overextended empire, the situation of which worsened significantly in 611 when the Sassanid Persians seized the key city of Antioch. Heraclius himself took charge of the Byzantine army and tried to check the Persian advance, only to be driven back as the Sassanids also took Jerusalem and plundered the city's Christian relics, including the supposed True Cross of Jesus. At the same time, a group called the Avars captured some of the Byzantine lands in the Balkans. Having lost nearly half of the empire, Heraclius bided his time, made a treaty with the Avars, and then led an offensive against the Sassanids. Through a skillful combination of military success and targeted diplomacy, Heraclius drove the Sassanids from Byzantine lands and even advanced as far as Ctesiphon, the Persian capital, before the Sassanids--now under the rule of a usurper--sued for peace. Heraclius's success was short-lived, however, as only a few years later a Muslim army stormed out of the Arabian Peninsula and conquered Egypt and Syria, again nearly halving the empire's lands. Through tactical retreats, Heraclius probably preserved the empire, though he died soon after as the emperor of a rump state.

It should be said that the Byzantines were far more fortunate than their traditional rivals the Sassanids, whose capital was directly in the path of the Muslim onslaught. Ctesiphon and the rest of the Sassanid Empire fell within a decade and a half of the first Muslim invasions. While Muslim armies and navies tried repeatedly over the next two centuries to besiege and conquer Constantinople, the Byzantines managed to weather each storm and thus long outlived the Sassanids. Surviving the Muslim advance did force the Byzantines to change the social and political organization of their empire. It would henceforth be organized very much along military lines, with Constantinople sitting in the center of a web of semi-autonomous provinces governed by military officials. By the turn of the first millennium, the Byzantines under emperor Basil II had largely rebuilt their empire, though they never regained their territories in the Levant or Egypt. Basil in particular focused his attention on the expansion through the Balkans. This movement to the north affected the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe in dramatic ways. Two Byzantine missionaries--Cyril and Methodius--first preached Christianity to the Slavs, at least according to legend. These Eastern European peoples thus came to follow the Eastern Orthodox pattern of Christian life and worship, a process that culminated in the evolution of Old Church Slavonic, the language of liturgy and theology of the Slavic Orthodox faiths. The Serbs, Russians, and others trace their origins as peoples at least partially to these roots.

Conclusion

While viewed by many generations in the west as a bleak and transitionary period, Late Antiquity (as brought to light by scholars over the last half century) reveals itself to be a vital, formative era in the history of western civilization.The entrenchment of Christianity as the dominant faith and cultural tradition of the West--a position it has occupied ever since--is the period's most lasting legacy. Yet the political, social, and cultural transformations of the era extend beyond Christianity. Indeed, most of the structures that would dominate Western Europe

for the next five hundred years--and in some cases for the next millennium--were put into place in Late Antiquity. However, there was one final cataclysm that shook the now-Christian Roman world and completed the transformation begun in the third century: the expansion of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries. It is to that vital sequence of events that this book now turns.

Part II

The Emergence of Europe

CHAPTER 6

Western Europe in the Middle Ages

> It's my belief that history is a wheel. 'Inconstancy is my very essence,' says the wheel. Rise up on my spokes if you like but don't complain when you're cast back down into the depths. Good times pass away, but then so do the bad. Mutability is our tragedy, but it's also our hope. The worst of times, like the best, are always passing away. —Boethius

Introduction

Historians have had difficulty classifying the span of time between the traditional date for the collapse of the Roman state in the west in AD 476 and the emergence of Modern Europe in the sixteenth century. Scholars are increasingly uncomfortable with the term "Dark Ages" in particular.

Beginning with the Italian Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteen centuries, Europeans increasingly noted that life in their day was quite different in certain respects from culture and civilization at the end of the Western Roman Empire. They, and subsequent Europeans, developed several names for the intervening period of time. The term *Dark Ages* is one example. Although the term originally referred to the corruption of the Latin language and the comparative lack of surviving historical sources, the term eventually acquired a strong sense of moral condemnation. The phrase "Dark Ages" has come to mean a time of superstition, moral decay, technological backwardness, and even evil. However, modern historical analysis demonstrates that this was not necessarily the case when the period is considered on its own merits, rather than in comparison to the classical or modern worlds. Historians today largely avoid the term *Dark Ages*, although it persists in the popular mind. This narrative avoids the term, too.

The term *Medieval* (derived from the Latin words *medium* and *aevum,* meaning "Middle Age") provides a second example of a name given to the interval between the classical past and the modern world. This term is not as negative as the pejorative "Dark Ages." Until such time as scholars develop a better term to describe this period, we will stick to the "Middle Ages." An alternative term is, however, eventually required if we are to come to understand this period on its own terms rather than through the often-negative connotations its names have had in the comparatively recent past.

This chapter uses the term *Middle Ages* to describe that era of Western civilization when the Christian faith spread first through the Roman Empire and later into nearly all of Europe. Roman and barbarian cultures and governments fused during this time, but were interpreted and applied through the teachings, values, and administrative techniques of Christianity. The civilization of Western Europe in the Middle Ages became a blend of three strong influences: Roman, Catholic, and Barbarian. In order to appreciate the influence of Christianity in the early Middle Ages, our narrative now turns to the development and maturation of monasticism, to the deep impact that monasteries had during the period.

Rise of the Latin Church and Monasticism

A number of early Christian leaders arose during the second to sixth centuries. We know them collectively as "church fathers." Each of the Latin Fathers made major contributions to what would become Meidieval civilization. Many were bishops or other prominent priests, but all are known for a corpus of writings that account for much of the historical, doctrinal, and theological elements of orthodox Christianity. Among the Latin fathers, four stand out as exceptionally influential: St. Ambrose (c. 330–397, Archbishop of Milan, whose example as a good bishop served as an ideal, inspring subsequent generationa of Christian bishops). St. Jerome (c. 347–420), who translated the Bible into Latin and is considered a principal author of the Vulgate Bible: the bible of the Medieval Latin Church. St. Augustine (c. 354–430) whose writings defined many fundamental doctrines in the Latin Church in the middle Ages, such as celibacy, and divine grace, and further defined the ideal government in his book *The City of God*. Pope Gregory the Great (pope from 590–604) is widely considered the first Pope of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Roman Church, or Roman Catholic Church.

Pope Gregory the Great

Gregory (r. 590–604) was born into a wealthy, some would even say an aristocratic, Roman family that had strong ties to the church in Rome. Although born to position and favored with a capacity for administration, he desired little more than to retire from a public life into a private existence of contemplation, simple labor, and prayer. In other words, he wanted to become a monk. He is associated with the rise of papal supremacy, meaning that the bishop of Rome was—the claim goes—destined to be the head of all Christianity by virtue of priesthood connections to the apostle Peter. Peter was martyred and buried in Rome, and according to tradition, he ordained the bishop of Rome as his replacement. Some historians mark Gregory's papacy as the formal beginning of the *institution* known as the Roman Catholic Church. Gregory was a prolific writer, but was also widely known for his reforms. He restructured the liturgy of the Mass and helped make its performance and observance standard throughout Western Europe. He may be best known for the standardization of the music of the Mass, and established a reformed music that was named after him: Gregorian Chant. Gregorian chant eventually employed eight diatonic scales, known as church modes, with accompanying liturgical texts in Latin. This structure would come to dominate Western music and literature for the next thousand years. Gregory also established a standard repertoire of hymns and melodies used in the Mass, and tied the chants to the liturgical calendar by assigning particular text and chants to particular days of the year and particular readings from the Bible. In a Europe increasingly divided into small kingdoms, the church—especially as reformed and redefined by Gregory and others—was becoming a source of needed uniformity, assuming a leading role in the evolution of Catholicism.

Monasticism

A growing number of believers became more and more interested in living a simple life, as advocated by Jesus in scripture: "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet

I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these" (Luke 12:27 NIV), and "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you" (John 6:27 NIV). Advocates of this simpler Christian life, often removed from urban centers and located in the remote wilderness, looked to the example of John the Baptist, who lived in the desert and ate locusts and wild honey, wearing camel skins. They concluded that the ideal religious community, the true Christendom, involved a life of simple labor, worship, and contemplation.

The system of life and worship that resulted is called monasticism, and its practitioners are called monks. The first monks, such as St. Anthony of Egypt (c. 251–356) and Simeon the Stylite (c. 390–459), lived as hermits. Curiously, they attracted followers and devotees, ending their isolation and disrupting their contemplation. *Eremitic* monasticism (a life of isolation as a hermit) developed a communal counterpart, *cenobitic* monasticism (life in a community of monks located in a largely self-contained precinct called a monastery). St. Pachomius (292–348) began following the example of St. Anthony, living a solitary life in the desert. He eventually concluded that he could not endure the severe rigors and physical hardships associated with solitary life under those conditions. Pachomius, together with a group of similar monks, founded communities that eventually became perhaps the first Christian monasteries (as early as AD 318). Cenobites, such as Pachomius, established a common rule and pattern of daily life that, unsurprisingly, consisted largely of simple labor, worship, and contemplation.

St. Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–543) wrote the most important monastic rule of early Christianity. The Rule of Benedict, or Benedictine Rule as it came to be known, regulated all aspects of life in the twelve original monasteries he founded, and eventually became the dominant rule throughout Catholic monasticism to this day. The core principles of the Benedictine Rule may be summarized in the phrase *ora et labore* (Latin, "pray and work"). The rule organized the operation and administration of the monastery under the supervision of a father, called an abbot. Work and prayer were alternated throughout the day through the Divine Office. The Divine Office divided the day into eight "canonical hours," beginning in the very early morning with *matins* (also called *lauds*) and concluding the day at *vespers* in the evening. Each canonical hour had associated biblical texts. For example, *matins* customarily commenced with the text, "O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise" (Psalms 51:15 NIV). The Divine Office was chanted daily during the canonical hours, and numerous plainchants (or "Gregorian chants," as they came to be called) made music a central activity in Benedictine monasteries.

Monasteries became centers of learning, repositories of knowledge, and bases for missionary efforts as barbarian kingdoms eventually replaced much of the Roman administration in the west during very troubling times. Gregory the Great, realizing the potential for spreading papal authority outside of Italy, sent a commission of Benedictine monks to Britain in AD 596, for example, in order to convert the Anglo-Saxon peoples to Christianity under the direction of the church in Rome. Forty Benedictine missionaries were given permission by King Æthelbert of Kent (r. ca. 590–616) to preach in his capital city, Canterbury. Æthelbert himself converted in about AD 601. Through Æthelbert, other Anglo-Saxon kings were thereafter converted, establishing a pattern of Christianization followed throughout Europe in the coming centuries: (1) The monarch converted, together with his household and governors, and (2) the populace became Christian over time. Monasteries played a vital and active role in the Christianization of Europe, which was largely accomplished by the year 1000.

The life of the English monk known as the Venerable Bede (c. 673–735) exemplifies the effects of the spread of monasticism and the preservation of learning in remote monasteries. In 674 Bede joined the monastery of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, founded in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria. Making use of one of the most substantial libraries in Britain (which had perhaps two hundred books), he wrote several notable works, including the famous *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, which he finished about 731. Bede wrote several other works for the express purpose of education. His work on chronologies, *De Temporum Ratione*, definitively established the BC/AD system of dating first pioneered by Dennis the Humble (470–544) as the unified standard of time measurement used in Western—and indeed world—civilization. Monks, as the most learned persons available to the numerous barbarian kings of Europe, commonly served as royal administrators and advisors, making the link between church and state natural and the sociopolitical ideal of Christendom more of a reality than before.

The Merging of Church and State in the Barbarian Kingdoms

During the first five centuries AD, several factors combined to form the basis for a deep cultural and civilizational transformation in the region of Western Europe: (1) the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, (2) the rise of numerous smaller barbarian kingdoms in its place, (3) the broad migrations of large barbarian populations, and (4) the conflicts among the numerous Christian sects. For centuries, there was no central political authority or common culture in the region following the collapse of western Rome. With the emergence of a powerful papacy and centralized religious authority largely accomplished under a number of capable popes beginning with Leo the Great (r. 440–461) up through Gregory and his successors, the spread of Roman Catholicism (through gradual conversion) encouraged uniformity and centrality. The union of Roman Catholic Christianity with the administration of the converted barbarian kings was not only natural, but desirable, as it imparted a sense of divine sanction to a particular king's reign and provided a much-needed royal administration staffed by the only capable and literate persons of the day: monks. Three broad regions of Western Europe subsequently experienced a parallel centralization and unification of political authority in connection with a strengthened papacy and the direct involvement of monasteries. These three regions are known today as France, Germany, and Britain. All three were either governed—or strongly influenced to one degree or another—by two powerful Frankish barbarian dynasties: the Merovingians and the Carolingians. Consequently, the founding of Christendom in Western Europe is tied to the establishment of Frankish rule.

The Rise of the Franks (AD 500–841)

A barbarian people known to the Romans as the *Franci*, or the *gens Francorum*, lived along the central stretch of the Rhine River. During the third century, some tribes within Frankish culture raided the Roman Empire, while others joined the Roman army as allied forces (*foederati*) and, ironically, defended Roman territory *against* incursions by other Franks. The Roman Empire recognized the kingdom of the Salian Franks, located within Roman territory near modern Belgium, in 357. The Salian kingdom produced the Merovingian dynasty, the

earliest stable Germanic royal dynasty, which governed a large portion of territory in the former Roman Empire in the west.

The Merovingian Dynasty (481–751)

The Merovingian dynasty ruled over the Salian Franks for more than two and a half centuries. The first Merovingian king, Childeric I (c. 457–481), descendant of a semilegendary man named Merovech, established the dynasty. But Clovis I (466–511), his son, extended Merovingian rule throughout most of what would become France over the course of the next thousand years or so. The conversion of Clovis to Catholicism is considered one of the most significant events in Western history. Many of the barbarian kingdoms were converted to Christianity during the fourth and fifth centuries, but they converted to Arianism (considered heresy following the Council of Nicaea). Under the tutelage of his Catholic wife, Clotilde, Clovis, already an Arian Christian, converted and was baptized again, this time as a Catholic, in 496. This strengthened Clovis's ties with local Gallo-Roman aristocrats, including bishops and lords, and also with the papacy, setting the stage for his further conquests in France, where he drove the Visigoths southward into Spain and campaigned in portions of the Italian peninsula. By these means, Clovis established the first Catholic barbarian kingdom, which governed an entire region of Western Europe over a span of centuries.

The Merovingian kings had accomplished much by the eighth century. The Merovingian heritage includes: (1) establishing territorial stability throughout much of modern France; (2) securing the dominance of Roman Catholic orthodoxy over the Arian heresy first embraced by several migrant barbarian tribes in the west; (3) forging strong ties to the papacy, which imparted legitimacy to the Merovingians vis-à-vis their competitors among the Frankish tribes; (4) creating a legal code, the Salic Laws, which influenced many later European legal systems in France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and even faraway Romania; and (5) defeating an Islamic raiding party at Tours in 732, marking the farthest advance of Muslim armies into Europe (see below).

The Carolingian Dynasty (AD 741–843)

Although Merovingian rule continued, the actual power of the kings significantly declined sometime toward the end of the seventh and early eighth centuries. Over time the mayors of the palace (Latin, *majordomo*), emerged as the true power behind the throne. The Carolingians first began their rise to royal power as *majordomos* to the Merovingians. Taking advantage of unrest in the early eighth century, Charles Martel, perhaps the best known of the *majordomos*, consolidated his power over virtually the entire Frankish kingdom. In 732 he defeated a Muslim expeditionary force near the city of Tours. The Battle of Tours is considered one of the turning points in the history of Western civilization, ending as it did the further advance of Muslim armies into Western Europe. Some historians point out, in contrast, that Muslim armies had already spent their strength conquering Iberia beginning in 711 and that they were not in a position to take much more of Europe in any event. Charles received the soubriquet "Martel" ("the Hammer") following his victory, and the defeat of the Muslims was hailed as epochal through the succeeding centuries in the West, being viewed as saving Christian civilization from Islamic conquest (no doubt an exaggeration, but a significant one).

Pippin III (called "the Short," r. 752–768)

Pippin III was the son of Charles Martel. He was eventually able to supplant the Merovingian kings entirely and establish his own dynasty, known as the Carolingians. Pope Stephen II (715–757) anointed Pippin as king, the first time the pope had anointed a barbarian king outside of Italy. Pippin gratefully granted rights to certain northern Italian territories to Stephen in exchange. The grant, called the Donation of Pippin, formed the *legal* basis of the Papal States (of which only Vatican City now remains), giving the bishops of Rome a legal basis for eventual control over their own nation, initially under Carolingian patronage. Many historians wonder if the *Donation of Pippin* wasn't part of a larger understanding between the papacy and the Carolingian monarch. Pippin needed the sort of legitimacy that only being anointed by the pope could impart, and the papacy would benefit from possession of its own territory. Perhaps such a deal did occur, but in the form of a document called the *Donation of Constantine* now known to be an eighth-century forgery. The *Donation of Constantine* purported to formalize a grant of power by the Emperor Constantine the Great (chapter 3) to Pope Sylvester I (r. 314–335).

Constantine, the *Donation* asserts, was afflicted with leprosy—it is now known that this was not the case in reality—and was cured by Pope Sylvester I. In gratitude, the *Donation* asserts, Constantine gave the pope supreme authority over all Christians in the Empire. In addition to spiritual supremacy over the entire Empire, the *Donation* also purported to give the bishops of Rome supreme civil authority in the western Empire. This grant of civil authority in the west purportedly allowed the pope to coronate Pippin III. Although there is no clear proof that the Donation of Pippin and the *Donation of Constantine* were in fact part of such a packaged deal, this remains the most probable explanation of the pope's unusual journey to anoint Pippin king (a power that the Pope would have trouble claiming without the *Donation of Constantine*) and Pippin's unprecedented grant of an entire region to the papacy. It should be noted that the *Donation of Constantine* was used repeatedly in the Middle Ages to assert papal authority over civil rulers for centuries to come, even though it was recognized as a forgery.

Charlemagne (r. 774–814)

Known also as Charles the Great or *Carolus Magnus*, Charlemagne was the first European to receive the title emperor since the collapse of the Roman west in about 476. He was unquestionably the greatest of the Carolingian kings. The son of Pippin, Charles expanded the territories bequeathed to him. New territories taken under Charlemagne included Northern Italy, Bavaria and Saxony in Germany, virtually all of France, and a strip of land southwest of the Pyrenees Mountains known as the Spanish March. Having completed the conquest of Lombard Italy begun by his father, he turned much of the territory over to the pope.

The importance of the Carolingian dynasty to the establishment of a secure and dominant papacy is illustrated by the grant of Italian territories, but equally by the coronation of Charlemagne as *emperor* in Rome on Christmas Day, 800. This came about when Pope Leo III (r. 795–816) was forced to flee Rome to escape political and religious enemies and hurriedly traveled several hundred miles northward to Saxony to locate the king, where he appealed personally to Charlemagne for protection. Charlemagne escorted the pope back to Rome, and while attending Mass in St. Peter's church, was (unexpectedly, according to some sources) crowned emperor on the spot by the grateful Leo.

The "Carolingian Renaissance." Charlemagne instigated a series of religious, educational, and administrative reforms as part of what was later called the Carolingian Renaissance. Charlemagne relied heavily upon monks and monasteries to accomplish his reforms at all levels, again demonstrating the needed expertise provided by individuals trained in monasteries. One monk in particular, Alcuin (732–804), played a major role in realizing Charlemagne's reformatory aims.

Religious Reforms. Charlemagne's religious reforms were broad, including reforming the Mass, editing the Vulgate, and embracing a more uniform system of musical notation for plainchant. Alcuin assisted in the reformation of the Mass, introducing the Irish Northumbrian custom of singing the *credo* in the Mass. The creed, based upon the orthodox formulation developed at the Council of Nicaea, affirmed that the orthodox Trinitarian view should be part of the Ordinary of the mass. Alcuin also arranged votive Masses (special Masses for feast days and for particular days of the week, for example) in the order still followed by Catholics. Alcuin also edited the Latin Vulgate Bible. Although not attributable to Alcuin directly, the Carolingians made increased use of musical markings called *neumes*. The neumatic system consisted of marks made above the text of the chant indicating a rising or falling melody line and may also have included instructions for certain elements of performance such as articulation, duration, and tempo. In addition to musical reforms, church hierarchy and offices were renovated, including clarification of the pastoral duties of priests and bishops. The emperor called upon the bishops and priests to organize themselves into councils, called *synods*. Considering the power of the emperor to appoint abbots and bishops together with the dependence of the pope on Charlemagne's support, his reforms, unsurprisingly, were widely supported by the church throughout the realm. Finally, Charlemagne obtained a copy of the Rule of Benedict and required its adoption by all monasteries throughout the kingdom.

Administrative Reforms. Charlemagne enlarged and restructured Frankish administration, ruling his empire through decrees called capitularies. He enforced them through a variety of means. For example, he required all males in the realm to swear an oath of allegiance to him and expanded the number of local administrative units, called counties, to 350. Each county was headed by a count, who served as a judge and tax collector charged with enforcement of the capitularies. He also perpetuated the system of roving royal inspectors known as the *missi dominici* (meaning envoys of the lord). Each set of inspectors customarily consisted of two officials, one noble and the other religious (often high religious officials such as bishops). They were sent out annually to see to it that the counties truly enforced the capitularies and to hear pleas from the populace. These officials were strangers to the assigned region and could have no local allegiances or ties.

Educational Reforms. Charlemagne instituted several educational reforms. He established a school to train his administrators in the capital city of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). Alcuin was in charge of the school and wrote several of its textbooks. A simplified and uniform writing system was invented as well, called Carolingian Minuscule. In fact, whenever modern students use printed handwriting, they are basically using Carolingian Minuscule. The script allowed literate persons throughout the kingdom to read a common Latin script, replacing the numerous variations that had developed over the centuries. Charlemagne's *scriptora* (the room or place in

monasteries devoted to writing and copying manuscripts) copied thousands of manuscripts in the new handwriting style, and much of our present knowledge of the Carolingian period itself, and perhaps of the classical world itself, came from these copies. Without these copies, our knowledge of the classical world would be severely restricted.

These reforms, and others not discussed, evidence Charlemagne's strength of will, strong sense of purpose, and comparatively unlimited energy. His religious reforms exercised a lasting effect upon Christianity, yet he himself, according to his biographer Einhard (c. 775–840), a courtier under Charlemagne, was not particularly pious as measured by a more modern standard. His educational reforms affect the Western world today, but throughout most of his life, he could read but not write, and could hardly sign his own name. Einhard's biography does, however, deliver the vision of a self-assured emperor, determined to build an empire to rival Rome, to establish and extend orthodox Christianity by means of new missionary monasteries founded on the Rule of St. Benedict, to strengthen the papacy, to provide justice to his subjects, and to rule well. No single ruler did more to secure the establishment of Christendom. In turn, Charlemagne laid the foundations for the Europeanization of Western civilization.

Treaty of Verdun (843). Charlemagne failed, however, in one key respect: he was unable to establish a stable succession to the crown. The custom of Frankish rulers was to create subkingdoms for all of their sons while simultaneously providing a single supreme ruler taken from among them. Charlemagne divided his kingdom among his three sons, but two of them predeceased him, leaving his empire to the survivor, Louis (soubriquet: "the Pious," r. 814–840). Louis the Pious also divided the empire among his three sons: Lothar, Louis (soubriquet: "the German"), and Charles (soubriquet: "the Bald"). Following the death of their father, Louis the Pious, the three engaged in a civil war, vying for ultimate control of the empire. About three years later, they executed the Treaty of Verdun (843). Charles the Bald received most of what is now France, Lothar possessed a narrow stretch of land from Holland southeastward to Italy, and Louis the German (unsurprisingly) received most of what became modern Germany. Of these three regions, France was the first to achieve stable unification, whereas Italy and Germany would have to wait until the nineteenth century. The Empire of Charlemagne had come to an end.

England to the Twelfth Century

The inhabitants of the British Isles were, during the period of the establishment of Christendom, a mixture of quite different peoples, some counted among the islands' most ancient inhabitants and others among recent immigrants. The more ancient inhabitants included Celtic peoples that migrated to regions of the Elbe River in the sixth and fifth centuries BC, such as the Britons and the Picts. Following the abandonment of the British Isles by the Roman Empire in the early fifth century, Angles and Saxons from the Rhine River area emigrated to the region of England. Beginning in the eighth century, Norsemen, commonly called Vikings, entered the British Isles from Scandinavia. The Anglo-Saxon King Alfred the Great (871–899) repelled a Viking invasion, and England remained Anglo-Saxon for over one hundred years longer. The Vikings were eventually victorious under Cnut the Great (1016–1035), who entered England in AD 1015 with an army of about ten thousand transported in two hundred longboats, bringing the territory under his control by 1016.

Viking rule, however, was short-lived. By 1042, Viking rule effectively ended when another Anglo-Saxon ruler, Edward the Confessor (r. 1042–1066), became king. Following Edward's death, a dispute arose between two claimants to Edward's throne, namely, Edward's brother-in-law Harold and his cousin Duke William of Normandy, known in England as William the Conqueror (r. England 1066–1087). The reader should note that Normandy was a territory in northwestern France, immediately south of England, that was occupied by "northmen" or Vikings in the tenth century; William was, consequently, of Viking descent, although his people had long before adopted local customs and speech. In October 1066, William made an amphibious landing in England and proceeded toward London. The Anglo-Saxon armies of Harold and the Norman forces of William met at Hastings. At the Battle of Hastings, October 14, 1066, Harold was killed and William took England, later becoming king on Christmas Day 1066. The events of the battle were memorialized in the famous Bayeux Tapestry, which is 224 feet long and 1.6 feet tall, completed in about 1076 and originally displayed in the Bayeux cathedral. The Vikings had arguably won, after all.

William initiated a series of reforms that transformed government, law, and society in the British Isles, and laid the foundation for the modern nation of England. Among these reforms were (1) a census, called the *Domesday Book*, which provided a fairly accurate report of the country and its agricultural production, establishing a basis for more effective taxation; (2) the redistribution of lands, in that William consistently took lands from English nobility and redistributed them to his own supporters, establishing the legal basis for landownership concepts familiar in English and Anglo-American law today; (3) the "Normanization" of English rule, in that by about 1075 major noble offices, including earldoms, were held by Normans, ending Anglo-Saxon supremacy; (4) the "Normanization" of the high clergy, in that by 1096, only Normans held bishoprics; and (5) the emigration of numerous Anglo-Saxon nobles to nearby Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, and for some few at least, the Byzantine Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean. The changes begun by William continued and were enhanced by his successors, the Plantagenet dynasty.

CHAPTER 7

The High Middle Ages

> We are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more than they, and things at a greater distance, not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part, or any physical distinction, but because we are carried high and raised up by their giant size.
>
> —John of Salisbury (c. 1120–1180)

Introduction

The period from 1000 to about 1450, commonly called the High Middle Ages, witnessed the emergence of a Europe constructed upon the cultural, social, religious, and political foundations laid during the formation of Christendom (see chapter 4). It has been incorrectly considered in the popular mind as a continuation of the stagnant and superstitious Dark Ages, almost as if civilization awoke in the fifteenth century and somehow decided to get on with the business left off in AD 476, when the rule of western Rome ended. As we saw in chapter 4, the period preceding the High Middle Ages was anything but stagnant. The High Middle Ages was an even more dynamic period of time, a mixture of equilibrium and disequilibrium that is the focus for this chapter.

Equilibrium

The number three seemed to be of particular interest in Christendom, and it appears frequently in the thought of the times as an organizing principle favoring equilibrium. Perhaps the number is used because, just as the heavens were governed by a mysterious unity comprised of three gods, so on earth the ideal Christian civilization was a unity composed of three parts. These three parts were used to define in ideal terms the rest of Christendom—socially, politically, and economically.

Society

The Anglo-Saxon monk Aelfric (c. 955–1010) defined Christian society using the metaphor of a throne that rested upon three legs. The king, seated on the throne, ruled the totality, and the three separate elements of society formed a unity under his rule. Aelfric, after the manner of King Alfred the Great gave each leg a Latin descriptor: *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*:

> The *laboratores* are those who by their labor provide our means of subsistence, the *oratores*, those who intercede for us with God, the *bellatores*, those who protect our cities and defend our soil against the invading army … for the good of all (128).

Each category constituted a full-time, lifelong career, so to speak. Every member of society had, ideally, a clear function as part of a whole. The function of the king was to make certain that each leg did its part to sustain the kingdom and to promote Christian society. The category *laboratores* probably originally meant "all peasants," but came to include everyone who was not a member of the *oratores* or the *bellatores*.

Politics

Two comparatively stable kingdoms emerged during the High Middle Ages that incorporated, to a large degree, the tripartite social organization Aelfric defined, namely, England and France (both discussed in greater detail below). Each classification of society worked in its sphere, ideally contributing to the harmony of the whole while governed by its "natural leaders," that is, by the king and the noble *bellatores*, under the watchful care of the church. The church, in turn, anointed and supported the king, and full members of society were Christians, subject to the pains of excommunication or other religious means of securing harmony.

The political relationships between members of the first two classifications (i.e., the *oratores* and the *bellatores*) were often formalized by means of a series of personal oaths of fealty, a system commonly called *feudalism*. The system was not universal to Western Europe, but was widespread enough to justify its discussion in a narrative history such as this. These oaths created the relationship of *lord* to *vassal* and were often made in exchange for a grant of land, often called a fief. The fief was granted in exchange for the vassal's personal fealty and services. In simplified terms, the king secured oaths from his barons, by which means the king became lord and the barons became vassals. In exchange for the oaths, the king allotted to a baron a fief large enough to maintain the barony and provide the services specified. The baron (a member of the *bellatores*, it should be remembered) promised to provide a certain number of knights on horseback, a certain number of foot soldiers, and perhaps archers. These knights, soldiers, and archers required equipment and training, and the only source of wealth available to provide it during this period was land and the product of land (i.e., the fief). The baron, for his part, would, as lord, take oaths from his knights (who became *his* vassals), granting them fiefs in exchange for services and soldiers. The system became complex and on occasion the oaths given and taken might conflict with each other, but on the whole, it proved functional. The modern reader might find feudalism confusing: although there were kingdoms, there was no citizenship or allegiance to the kingdom itself, but only personal fealty to the lords of the realm, and through them, eventually to the king. Political relationships in feudalism were consequently personal, not state-related.

The nobles solidified their position within the feudal system through monopolization of the crown and other hereditary offices. The crown was controlled by *dynasties*, ruling families who passed the right to rule within their bloodline, creating an entitlement to rule. The concept of a "state," independent of these personal oaths and personal political relationships, eventually emerged, resulting in the teaching of what is often called "the king's two bodies." The crown of the kingdom had two "bodies": there was the *physical* body of the king (Henry II Plantagenet, for example), and the *invisible* "body" of the English crown. When the physical king (Henry II) died, the "crown of England" did not die, but was later invested in a new king at coronation. This helps explain the odd phrase, "The king is *dead*, long *live* the king!"

Like the crown, the various offices granted to nobility gradually became hereditary—with the exception of the knight. Four main ranks of hereditary nobility became common in Western Europe. Ranked according to their power and their office within the emerging state, they included titles of office such as duke/duchess, marquis/marchesa, count/countess, and baron/baroness. The knight occupied the lowest rank of nobility as a rule, and his office was not hereditary during the High Middle Ages, although it provided a stepping-stone to higher rank for some persons aspiring to hereditary nobility. Since any capable person could, in theory and occasionally in practice, become a knight, it was arguably the only viable option for upward social mobility at the time.

Economy

The economic functions of the fief, an important element of the feudal economic system in the eleventh century, were arguably derived from *manorialism*. Because rural society dominated at this time, there were very few cities in Europe. Consequently, competent agriculture was needed. Most produce from land was grown and consumed locally, and with the overall absence of trade and commerce, the system was essentially one of subsistence farming.

The manorial system of agriculture emerged out of the ancient Roman villa—which was essentially a country house that increasingly functioned as a self-contained communal farm. The Roman villa system had emerged over the last century and a half of the Roman Empire in the west. By the ninth century, the basic features of manorialism were in place: the lord of the manor managed agriculture, dispensed justice, and provided defense, while the labor (called serfs) were bound to work the soil for life.

The lands of the manor were divided into three basic parts. First, the *demesne*, the lands operated directly by the lord for the maintenance of the manorial household and his dependents. Second, *dependent land*, which the serfs worked for the benefit of the lord as part of their obligations of service. Third, *free peasant land*, leased by the peasants for a fixed fee (usually in the form of a portion of the produce from the land). The self-sufficiency of the manor led to common usages in many parts of Europe. The English manor of the eleventh century was often comprised of a manor house for the lord and his family; a small church and residence; a village for the serfs; fields (one-half planted at a given time and one-half fallow); woods for hunting, building, and firewood; a closed meadow; a commons (pasturage for all to use); a stream and pond; and wasteland. The manor captured the three ranks of society in microcosm: the lord of the manor (usually a member of the nobility), a member of the clergy (a friar, for example), and laborers (serfs, or un-free workers).

One or more manors might comprise a fief, and so the largely self-sufficient manors provided the basic economic structure for the entire system. With the coming of the heavily mounted knight in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, increasingly larger manors were required to provide the services necessary to put a fully armored man on horseback. This meant the construction and maintenance of stables, maintenance of breeding techniques and records, additional leatherworkers, and more evolved blacksmithing and armor crafting. Fortresses, such as the *motte-and-bailey*, were commonly constructed to provide for defense, and these gradually gave way to the stone keep, and in some cases, to the castle. Some manors became, in effect, small towns under the control of the nobility, often through local lords who were armed, trained, and prepared for long-term defense.

The tripartite division of society along functional lines, the creation of a stable nobility bound by oaths, and the manorial system provided the fundamental elements of socioeconomic and political stability and equilibrium, which often leads persons to the conclusion that the period was stagnant and unchanging. There were, however, strong factors of disequilibrium emerging between 1000 and 1450, indicating that, although the changes were gradual in many cases and took centuries to emerge and develop, the period was far from stagnant and unchanging.

Disequilibrium

Several socioeconomic, technological, and intellectual factors combined to promote disequilibrium within the otherwise orderly society and politics of the High Middle Ages. Although it would be ideal to present these factors in the context of a cause-and-effect chain of events, that is not possible based upon the available evidence. Instead, the factors of disequilibrium, the factors that promoted deep and sustained change, interacted with each other, forming a complex series of events in which historians can often clearly detect change, but not completely separate out the individual factors of change from each other.

Generally speaking, these factors emerged and interacted within the context of an improved climate: the colder weather and shorter growing seasons experienced between AD 600 and 900 were replaced by a warmer and drier climate between 900 and 1250, a climate more suitable for producing food, and much more of it. Geologists and historians refer to this change as the Medieval Warm Period, or the Medieval Climate Optimum. Although the factors promoting disequilibrium involve more considerations than climate alone, they cannot be separated from the framework of an existing ideal climate. As you read, keep in mind ways in which these factors might produce social, economic, and political disequilibrium.

Demographic Change

The population of Europe increased steadily and dramatically during the High Middle Ages. The amount of land under cultivation expanded, and diet improved through the introduction of crops high in protein and iron. Although hard figures are not available, the number of new towns and cities grew manifold, families were larger, and people generally lived longer. Although the acreage under cultivation multiplied in size several times, that factor alone does not account for the population increase. The surplus came from technological improvement.

Technological Advances

Modern westerners rarely think of the High Middle Ages in terms of technological advancement, but rather assume the opposite. Instead, the number of fundamental technologies either invented or dramatically improved is impressive, perhaps second only in historical importance to the Neolithic Revolutions (see chapter 1).

Improved Agricultural Techniques

Europeans inherited a “two-field” system of planting and harvesting, in which 50 percent of all cultivated land theoretically lay fallow and unplanted, a system that was little changed

from techniques developed thousands of years earlier. Beginning in the Carolingian period, farmers moved to a "three-field" system of planting and field rotation, in which two-thirds, or 66-plus percent, of land was under cultivation at any time. One-third of land was fallow, one-third was planted with a winter crop, and one-third with a spring crop. A single disastrous year was thus easier to survive, since crops were planted and harvested at different times of the year. By the eleventh century, the system was widespread in Western Europe.

Improved Agriculture-Related Technologies

Although the Middle Ages is often viewed as a period of material stagnation, several agriculture-related technologies were created or substantially improved. The padded horse collar provides a good example. Until the padded horse collar and harness were invented, the horse could not plow a field due to the pressure placed upon its throat: it would choke. The padded collar, invented sometime around the ninth century, transferred the weight of the plow from the throat to the shoulders. Subsequently, horses—which are stronger and more efficient—began replacing the ox as the primary agricultural draft animal.

Additionally, farmers increasingly employed heavier iron plows to till the heavier soils of northern Europe. The iron plow cut deeper and turned over more soil, exposing it to oxygen, resulting in improved crop yields. The padded horse collar made it possible for these plows to be used with horses, and farmers began using larger horses to pull the heavier plows more efficiently. Lighter draft breeds, such as the Friesian horse, were replaced more and more by heavy draft breeds, such as the French Percheron and the Belgian Brabant. Larger draft horses required increased traction to pull the iron plow, and this meant, in turn, developing iron horseshoes, which required improved blacksmithing services in return.

Mining and Metallurgy

As discussed in chapter 1, iron mining and blacksmithing were developed in the late second millennium BC, but now the use of iron plows and horseshoes made blacksmithing more widespread. Virtually every manor required a blacksmith. Mining techniques also improved to meet the demand not only for iron, but also for the extraction and use of the fundamental building material of the High Middle Ages: quarried stone.

Engineering

Whereas the Roman world depended largely upon slavery to provide essential labor, the Europeans of the High Middle Ages increasingly turned to machinery, which effectively multiplied the work energy of a single human by several orders of magnitude. The enormous amounts of grain being produced during the warm climate shift of the High Middle Ages required milling to provide flour for human consumption. The horizontal waterwheel (where the wheel lay parallel to the river or stream) had long been invented, for example, but its use was rather limited. During this time the number of waterwheels multiplied, but the main wheel was placed vertically, and water races and complex gearing were invented to transfer the vertical motion of the wheel to the horizontally spinning millstone. By means of these engineering innovations, the improved vertical European waterwheel could run nearly year-round, no matter

the level of the river or stream (which changed with the seasons). Similar wheels, gears, and pulleys were subsequently used in other machines as well.

Trade

Agricultural surplus—combined with a growing trickle of spices and textiles gained from other locales, particularly from contact between Muslim traders and the Crusader States in the Levant—led to increased trade in Europe from the tenth through the fourteenth centuries. Formerly isolated manors came into increasing contact with neighbors. And although roads were increasingly built, rivers were often used to facilitate commercial interaction. Regional trade networks developed: the Italian city-states of Venice in the east and Genoa in the west came to dominate Mediterranean trade, and the Rhone, Rhine, and Danube rivers developed extensive river-based trade. Two cases, however, stand out as examples of trade penetration in northern Europe: the fairs of Champagne in France, and the Baltic-based Hanseatic League.

Trade Fairs

By the late twelfth century a series of annual fairs were held along a route between Italy in the south and the Low Countries (later Holland and Denmark) in the north. The fairs passed through the region every week for six weeks. Goods traded included furs, textiles, spices, and leather. Towns often grew along the route, and this periodic local commerce eventually became more permanent. Coinage came to replace bartering, and moneylenders stationed themselves along the route. Eventually major banks established themselves toward the two end points of the route: in northern Italy, particularly Florence, and in the Low Countries, particularly Antwerp. Bank notes and similar paper transactions were gradually made uniform; the beginnings of modern banking were established in connection with growing transcontinental trade.

The Hanseatic League

A group of "free" cities, strung along the Baltic Sea and centered in the city of Lübeck, formed a trade confederation in 1358 called the *Hansa* (known in English as the "Hanseatic League"). Led mostly by leading merchants, the League protected themselves from "outsiders," not only in terms of trade competition, but in military terms as well, supplying security forces in some cases. The league's free-trade regions, particularly on the continent, formed effective states within a state, acting autonomously at times and even independently of their titular rulers in some cases.

Royal Charters

One thing became clearer to the rulers of England and France: they could secure independent revenue (and thus secure power) if they could control the trade. To accomplish this control, they made increasingly liberal use of the *royal charter*. A royal charter was a document issued by the crown creating a *corporate* institution. In this section, we will address two types of corporations commonly created through royal charters: towns and universities.

During much of the High Middle Ages, the monarch was the head of a complex organization of nobles and bureaucrats led by an aristocracy that dominated both the secular

nobility *and* the highest offices of the church. The crown had come to depend heavily upon the nobility and the high clergy to administer the government, collect taxes, and raise armies when needed. But the crown, particularly in England, became aware of two important alternative sources of (1) capable administrators, and (2) tax revenue, namely *universities* and *towns*. Monarchs began granting royal charters to establish and expand these progressively important corporate institutions.

Towns

First, any increase in the control of trade conceivably translated into control of taxation and revenues independent from the dues and services owed to the crown by its noble vassals, who were connected to it by private oaths. This independent increase in the control of taxation and revenues encouraged the establishment of towns—known as municipal corporations—by means of a royal charter. The charter first and foremost placed royal officials in charge of the king's interests within the town and the surrounding shire, and controlled the towns, which thereafter grew to become important trading *entrepôts* and tax centers. The rise of towns allowed the crown to tax more freely and act more independently from the nobility. Royal charters were also used to establish or secure artisan guilds, which became a prominent feature of town life. In some cases, guilds effectively controlled the town's administration (see the Hanseatic League, above). Guilds were essentially self-regulating artisan unions organized to regulate a particular craft and provide security for guild members. Master crafters regulated the guild, establishing production criteria, quality control, and prices for all members of the same craft within the guild's jurisdiction. Masters oversaw education in the trade, training new artisans (apprentices) who worked their way up to journeymen before producing a "masterpiece." The guild system, which took widespread hold in the thirteenth century, lasted well into the industrial revolutions of the nineteenth century, and the apprentice-journeyman-master system of labor training and rank remains in use today.

Universities

The crown also sought increased freedom from the church, and for that it turned to a rising institution: the university. So long as only monasteries and certain cathedral schools produced persons able to read, write, and calculate, the crown was dependent upon the church. But the new universities—such as Bologna (chartered in 1158, located in modern Italy) and the University of Paris (est. ca. 1160)—produced men capable of assisting the crown in efficiently administering the kingdom, but who also were gradually distanced from church orders. For example, Oxford University (est. ca. 1167) received a royal charter, as did its eventual rival, Cambridge (est. ca. 1209), when King Henry II of England banned English students from attending the University of Paris.

A new method of intellectual investigation, called Scholasticism, dominated the university curriculum from about 1100 to 1500. Whereas theological debates within Christendom had been traditionally resolved in former times by means of a direct appeal to authority and revelation, Scholasticism differed by making an appeal to human reason by means of dialectics, wherein two sides of a question were pitted against each other as if in *dialogue* and were reconciled through the rigorous presentation of logical points and counterpoints. Although eventually applied to many academic fields, the Scholastic disciplines of *philosophy* and

theology have arguably proven most influential and enduring. Employing classical philosophy (Plato, Aristotle, and others) as well as Islamic thought (Averroes, al-Ghazali, and others), Scholastic-era philosophers attempted to reconcile faith and reason—to harmonize, if possible, Christian revelation and theology on the one hand with non-Christian philosophy on the other. Famous Scholastics included Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), Peter Abelard (1079–1142), Albertus Magnus (ca. 1193–1280), William of Ockham (1288–1348, and *yes*, the logical tactic known as "Ockham's Razor" is named after him), and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). Aquinas authored the famous *Summa Theologica*, a work that may represent the most complete attempt at theological harmonization in history, offering logical proofs for the existence of God, human purpose, the doctrine of Christ, and the need for the Christian Church, its authority, and sacraments. In many respects, the modern liberal arts tradition in Western universities is the product of Scholasticism and the universities of the High Middle Ages.

Law

The modern discipline of law developed during the High Middle Ages. The increasing number of complex trade relationships, contracts, and taxation promoted legal reform and innovative adaptation. The Salic Law of the Franks, developed in or following the sixth century, for example, was incapable of managing such complex commercial affairs. Two important solutions were developed, one derived from Roman law, the other from the establishment of royal courts of law in England.

The Code of Justinian

The reader may recall that although Roman rule collapsed in the west toward the end of the fifth century, it continued in the east for nearly another thousand years. Known today as the Byzantine Empire, Romans continued ruling, not from the city of Rome, but from Constantinople. Constantinople would continue as the capital of the Roman Empire in the east until the city fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, at which point it became Istanbul. In the sixth century, one of its most capable rulers, Justinian I (r. 527–565), had his legal staff collect together the great body of Roman law and jurisprudence into a single law code, called the *corpus juris civilis*, known in English as the Code of Justinian. The *corpus* consisted of three parts: (1) the *Code* itself, meaning the actual Roman laws and legal principles; (2) the *Digest*, a treatment of Roman law in encyclopedic form, allowing lawyers and judges to explore the immense *Code* by topic; and (3) a practical guide—a virtual handbook—that trained a person in how to practice the law or act as a judge. The *Code* represented perhaps the greatest human achievement in law-based administration to that point in time, created by the greatest administrative state known to that time—Rome. The *corpus* had been forgotten in the West for centuries until revived in Bologna, Italy, by scholars such as Irnerius (c. 1050–1145). These scholars not only studied the *corpus*, but taught it in the nascent University of Bologna as a formal curriculum, training a growing number of lawyers fit for the growing variety of needed administrative duties. The *Code* was "rediscovered" just in time, as far as many merchants and rulers were concerned, as it provided authoritative and well-reasoned solutions to the current system of trade and its related commercial complexities. Most of continental Europe became strongly influenced by the *corpus*. If you have ever wondered why Western civilization has so many Latin legal terms, this is the most significant reason why.

English Common Law

England went a different route from the continent (although the *Code* would eventually exert a strong influence over English law as well). By the time of King Henry II (r. 1154–1189), England had developed a system of itinerant judges who traveled a circuit from town to town, administering the king's law. Royal courts, established throughout most of the shires of the realm, competed with other courts, principally those of the local nobility and those of the church, adding to the disequilibrium already present in English society. These judges preserved a record of their decisions, which were collected and shared with the other judges. Eventually a body of judge-made law emerged, known as English common law, which acted as a set of precedents for subsequent judges. The tradition of English common law, as eventually transmitted throughout the British Empire, today forms an important element of Western civilization.

Increase in Specialized Labor

Increased trade, growing royal administration, improved agriculture, the emergence of guilds, and the growing numbers of machines, such as waterwheels, meant increased specialization in the trades and labor. Farmers became specialists in their local areas, experts in the soil, the weather, and special crops grown in their locale. Cash-crop farming produced larger quantities of specialized agricultural products such as wines or cheeses for export (the region of Champagne in France has already been mentioned, and its companion region along the trade-fair route, Brie, also deserves mention—the one for its wine, and the other for its cheese). Blacksmithing grew apace, and surface-iron mining and stonemasonry expanded. Trained financial experts, bankers, accountants, professors, and engineers emerged as well. Since the overwhelming majority of such persons were neither *bellatores* (nobility) nor *oratores* (clergy), they fell into the default classification of society, the *laboratores*. But their training and expertise went far beyond that of land-bound serfs!

These new specialists were increasingly part of the sociopolitical complex that became bourgeois Western European society, and the tripartite Latin classification system discussed at length by Aelfric (see above) was beyond insufficient to include them within the traditional system of governance. Nor could personal oaths between lord and vassal define or regulate the critical system-wide services provided by these specialists. Their exclusion from office and political participation would eventually lead to revolution and, in some cases, extreme violence over the next six centuries or so. Although as we shall discover, the English, American, and French revolutions are widely considered to have cracked open the closed system of aristocracy-driven government, it was arguably not until World War I that the nobility of Western Europe permanently lost its total monopoly of government. Disequilibrium, indeed!

Origins of National Identity

Before proceeding, the reader must know that much of the remainder of our narrative concerning Western civilization will address the rise and establishment of the modern nation-state. In this chapter we will briefly address the formation of national identity, and the basic

elements of the nation-state. We will eventually discuss the political philosophy called nationalism, which aspires to create the nation-state, in greater detail in the chapters that follow, but for the present it is important for the reader to master a few basic definitions and concepts related to the *origins* of national identity—the first step toward nationalism and the nation-state––that took root in the High Middle Ages. First, the term "nation" isnot used as a substitute for the word "country." Instead, a "nation" means a particular *people*, defined by some combination of shared (1) historical experience, (2) religion, (3) language, (4) race or ethnicity, and (5) culture. Consequently, historians and other observers of humanity often speak of the English *nation* or of the French *nation*, meaning a collection of people who developed a sense of common identity based upon the foregoing factors, and calling themselves "French," or "English," or later, "Spanish." The term *state* is used to mean a system of government, a"country" if you will. The "nation-state" is a recent and modern system of government operated by a particular people who are politically and economically dominant within that state system. In the contemporary Western world, it is common for persons to believe that England ought to be ruled by the English *nation*, France by the French *nation*, Germany by the German *nation*, and so on. The beginnings of national identity are found in the High Middle Ages, and France and England are the first two western peoples to develop national identity in this sense.

But this was not always the case. The reader may recall that in chapter 2, we used the term *Greeks*, but that ancient Greek speakers never used this term for themselves. They called themselves Achaeans or Hellenes, or more likely Athenians or Spartans, but they did not call themselves Greeks. That identity was *assigned to them* in modern times—a superimposition of a modern concept onto the past. Ancient identities were often more tribal or local, but not truly "national." In chapter 3 we spoke of *Romans*, but this term meant a variety of things in the past, including a person who possessed citizenship no matter their region of origin or their ethnicity. *Romana* could mean a literal inhabitant of the *city* of Rome whether or not they were citizens. It also meant an individual that lived and *participated* in Roman civilization anywhere from the British Isles to Mesopotamia. It might even refer to persons who spoke Greek but not Latin. *Roman* might also refer to polytheists, Jews, or Christians. And the Byzantine Empire was "Roman," although the city of Rome had long been cut out territorially. The point here is that the concept of a "nation," a *people* who share a common self-identity by virtue of a shared religion, history, language, or culture, *is of recent origin*, tracing back to the High Middle Ages. The idea that a particular people had the right to a particular *place*, a fatherland, a motherland, a homeland, or even a Holy Land, is of recent origin as well. Finally, the idea that a nation had the right to the government of their *place*, the nation-state, is a modern concept.

Nation-states did not appear in all parts of the Western world, nor did they appear all at once. Our narrative cannot, therefore, cover the rise of the modern nation-state in a single chapter, but will instead trace the rise of national identity and of nationalism in various parts of the Western world, as well as the creation of the modern nation-state, over the course of many chapters. In this chapter we begin with the first two European regions to establish nation-states: England and France. We will cover Spain in chapter 6. Germany and Italy, latecomers to the system of nation-states, will be covered in chapter 8. For the present, however, we must return to the rise of England and France.

England

In chapter 4 we learned about Anglo-Saxon England, its being overtaken by Viking kingdoms in the early eleventh century, the brief return to Anglo-Saxon rule under Edward the Confessor, and the Norman invasion of 1066, all of which substantially contributed to the formation of the nation-state of England. We also learned how William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy (r. England 1066–1087), undertook the first comprehensive survey of a European kingdom (the famous *Domesday Book*), how he supplanted much of the existing Anglo-Saxon aristocracy with Norman barons, and how he reinforced the feudal network of private oaths between lords and vassals. These transformations continued under his successors.

Although the various peoples of England (Britons, Angles, Saxons, Vikings, and Normans) maintained their historical identities and in some cases their customs, they gradually came to see themselves as *English*. Given the instability prior to the time of William, there was little reason to believe that a cohesive identity would take hold. However, in the succeeding centuries, a strong English identity emerged owing to several important developments:

First, England is a comparatively isolated island, close to the European continent yet removed in significant ways. England has never been successfully invaded since the time of William, over nine hundred years ago, illustrating the durability of its isolation. England underwent a series of lengthy wars (described below) that further cemented the identity of the English people and of the kingdom of England (especially vis-à-vis their common enemy, France and the French).

Second, the power of the king expanded significantly during the High Middle Ages, creating a kingdom in which members of the various linguistic and ethnic groups learned a common language and shared in the burdens of government. William inherited special taxation powers from the Anglo-Saxon rulers, based mostly in the *Danegeld* (a tax originally intended to buy off Viking invaders, but continued by William and others long after the Viking threat had ended), which gave the king access to revenues uncontrolled by the nobility. The king also had several officers that could be called into service as his private militia: shire reeves (sheriffs) and warriors called thanes. By the time of Henry II, the crown received advice and support from the largely Norman nobility, but also from the burghers of leading towns (including London), mixing Saxon aristocracy with Norman nobility.

Third, the creation of a common law and custom promoted interactions based upon characteristics other than ethnicity. The King's Law (see "English Common Law," above) was uniform in composition, unlike Roman law (which often recognized and enforced different customs among peoples, especially barbarians) or Frankish laws such as the Salic Law (see above). The *Magna Carta* (1215, discussed below) would become an important source of constitutional principles, further cementing a common English identity.

This process of cultivating a strong and comparatively unified sense of English national identity occurred over a period of centuries, beginning with the Norman invasion in the eleventh century. Readers should remember that William, prior to becoming king of England in 1066, was, and remained, the Duke of Normandy, a region located in northwestern France. Consequently, he united in his person territories in the British Isles and on the continent. This continued under his successors. Henry II ruled even more territory in France. He was Duke of Normandy, Count of Anjou, Duke of Maine, Count of Nantes, and through his famous marriage to Eleanor, one of the most capable female rulers in Europe, was also Duke of Aquitaine. Henry II controlled nearly 60 percent of "France," a territory far larger than England itself. His dynasty, named the Angevins after his Duchy in Anjou, ruled England and parts of France for over three hundred years. These territories provided the Angevins with many sources of independent

income and allowed the Angevins to play off the interests of one group of nobles against another from region to region in both England and France.

Henry depended upon his sons, Richard, John, and Geoffrey, to help administer this large empire. Richard I (known as "the Lionhearted") ruled from 1189 to 1199 (see chapter 4: Third Crusade), and his younger brother John I (called "Lackland," or *Johan Sanz-Terre* in Norman French) ruled from 1199 to 1216. Whereas Richard proved a capable warrior, John unfortunately proved otherwise. Readers may recognize John from nineteenth-century popular portrayals, such as in Howard Pyle's *Robin Hood*, as a corrupt weakling. In truth, he was capable, but not enough so as to outwit or outperform his enemies in England and on the continent. His incapacities and abuses led to the formation of groups of powerful opponents, organized eventually into formal legal bodies, or parliaments, providing essentially English institutional checks and balances on royal power.

Here is how it happened. John was accused of abusing the system of fiefs in England to his own benefit by several of the barons of England. Basically, if the lord of a fief died and left either a minor son or only an unmarried daughter as heir, the king had the right to manage the fief until the son came of age or the daughter married. John took charge of several such fiefs, but neglected to reinstate the fief to its vassal lord once the defect was resolved. In this way, he gradually (and arguably illegally) dispossessed many nobles and acquired control over a significant amount of land. The barons ultimately rebelled, and took London as well as the regions of Lincoln and Exeter. John met the rebels at Runnymede (meaning "The Meadow of Meeting" in Anglo-Saxon) and in 1215 signed one of Western history's most enduring political documents, the *Magna Carta* (or "Great Charter"), so named at the time because of its enormous size, not its historical importance. Although John failed to honor the provisions of the *Magna Carta*, it was reinstated in 1217 following his death. The document stipulated that the king was subject to the law (that is, he was not above the oaths he made to his vassals as their lord). The *Magna Carta* has been cited as the source of the *Great Writ*, namely the English claim to a writ of *habeas corpus*, considered a central right against illegal imprisonment throughout the English legal system.

John engaged in a series of wars with Phillip II of France (r. 1180–1223), and thereby lost most of the Angevin possessions in France, including Normandy itself. The death of his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine (d. 1204), resulted in the loss of more territories in France. By 1215, John was engaged on two fronts, attempting to balance a civil war with rebellious barons in England with ongoing conflict on the continent. During his reign, the institutions and government of England took on a nascent national character.

France

Few observers would have thought that the rulers of the tiny *Ile-de-France* (the city of Paris and its environs) would grow to become the kings of the large and powerful kingdom of France by the end of the High Middle Ages. In fact, all bets would have likely been on the Angevins, the once-powerful rulers of England *and* over half of what would become France. Upon the death of the last Carolingian king in France, Louis V (r. 986–987), Hugh Capet stepped in. Hugh was the Duke of the *Ile-de-France* and the head of a powerful family of landowners called the Robertians. Hugh founded the Capetian dynasty, from which *all* subsequent kings of France descended. During the reign of Phillip II (r. 1180–1223, soubriquet: "Augustus"), a series of conflicts known as the Anglo-French wars (1204–1214) ended in huge territorial gains for the

Capetians. Expanding from the tiny *Ile-de-France*, the kingdom of France grew to include nearly 70 percent of the modern nation. The beginnings of national identity expanded with the territory, but did not come to fruition until the end of the Hundred Years War and the era of Joan of Arc, a story related below.

Impact Upon Christendom

What impact did the factors of disequilibrium and the rise of England and France have upon Christendom? The church and Christian society underwent their own transformation during the High Middle Ages. As was the case in chapter 4, we will discuss this transformation by examining the institution of the papacy, along with an examination of monasticism, the other important institution of Christendom.

The Papacy

As we learned previously, the papacy did not assume a position of European prominence, or even power, until after the Donation of Pippin in the 750s and the confirmation (ca. 774) of the grant of Italian lands by Charlemagne. During that time, the rulers of Western Europe had grown accustomed to certain privileges in the appointment of bishops and abbots within their realm, a procedure called "lay investiture." Given the amount of productive land controlled by monasteries and bishoprics, and the services provided by clergy, control over the appointment of high church officials was a power cherished by monarchs. But just as monarchs cherished this power, popes coveted it. A conflict between the papacy and the rulers of German territories (called the Holy Roman Empire and discussed in greater detail in chapter 6) erupted in 1075 in which the popes sought to terminate lay investiture. This conflict, called the Investiture Controversy, was particularly active between 1075 and 1122.

The Investiture Controversy began following a 1075 declaration by Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073–1085) calling for the independent—perhaps meaning "papal"—appointment of bishops. In 1076, Henry IV, king of Germany (r. 1056–1105) appointed the bishop of Milan, a territory then under German control. The pope responded by excommunicating Henry, who in 1077 personally asked for forgiveness at Canossa dressed in a hair shirt and standing barefoot in the snow. The battle between Henry and Gregory was not over, however, as Henry proclaimed another man, Clement III, to be the true pope and invaded Rome against Gregory. Religious authority and secular military might were headed toward open conflict. The German aspect of the conflict was finally resolved in 1122 by means of the agreement known as the Concordat of Worms. Pope Calixtus II (r. 1119–1124) presided over the signing of the Concordat. The concordat greatly enlarged papal authority: bishops thereafter could be freely appointed, with input from monarchs. This abolished royal claims to have authority to appoint new popes (a power that was vested in the new College of Cardinals), and recognized the authority of the papacy over all spiritual matters.

Papal power arguably reached its height during the time of Pope Innocent III (r. 1198–1216). Innocent consolidated power through the acquisition of lands and the increased involvement in the operation of kingdoms by means of papal *Decretals* (letters instructing monarchs or other persons implicated or involved in any ecclesiastical issue) and continued ecumenical councils supporting papal authority throughout the church. Additionally, the pope anointed the Holy Roman Emperor, exerting strong influence over the election of the rulers of

what would become modern Germany. The papacy made significant gains, but at the expense of alienating several powerful members of the European nobility—a major factor contributing to disequilibrium during the High Middle Ages.

Monasticism during the High Middle Ages

Monasteries remained centers of power and influence throughout the High Middle Ages. Not all monasteries were, however, equal in power and influence, and as often as not, French monasteries proved dominant. The monastery at Cluny, France, underwent a series of important reforms in the tenth century and emerged as perhaps the most influential of Western European chapter houses at that time. Likewise, the reforms carried out by the Cistercian order (also in France) elevated its leaders to positions of great influence. Reform and prestige went hand in glove.

Cluniac Reforms

By the middle of the tenth century, several influential monks, including Saint Odo (878–942), claimed that several monasteries in Western Europe had fallen away from the purer Benedictine Rule. The errors attributed to the improper operation of Benedictine monasteries by Odo and others included corruption of office (the sin of simony, or selling of church office for a bribe by an abbot) and concubinage (celibate monks maintaining concubines and occasionally fathering bastard children). The reformers concluded that the close association between manors and monasteries was the source of the problem. The answer, then, involved separating the two. In 910, Odo secured the establishment of a monastery at Cluny (located in Burgundy, France). This new monastery would answer directly to the pope instead of to a local lord of a manor. Odo also ensured that the parent house at Cluny would directly oversee all daughter houses (and by the twelfth century, there were over a thousand daughter houses).

Cistercian Reforms

By the end of the eleventh century, a growing number of monks accused the monastery and monks of Cluny of corruption, this time due to Cluny's expanded land holdings and the impressive revenues gained as profits derived from a popular pilgrimage through Burgundy that ended at the tomb of St. James the Evangelist in northern Iberia. In 1098 a monk named Robert of Molesme (c. 1028–1111) founded a new Benedictine abbey at Cîteaux. A revised Benedictine Rule was written for the monastery in 1119, called the Charter of Charity, establishing the unifying principles of what became the Cistercian Order. The new rule allowed for the establishment of lay brethren—workers that lived in the monastery but did not take *full* vows. The new arrangement proved so successful that by the end of the twelfth century, daughter houses under the Cistercian Order had been established throughout most of Western Europe. The growth of the Cistercian Order formed a key part of what historian Charles Homer Haskins called the "Renaissance of the Twelfth Century," a deep yet widespread material and spiritual awakening across Western Europe. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) was the most famous Cistercian monk. He was the originator of the Rule of the Knights Templar (a lay military order) and the author of hundreds of sermons, as well as the poem *Jesus dulcis memoria*, known throughout modern Christianity as the hymn "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee." The preeminent

mystic of his day, Bernard was arguably the most influential man of his time, although he had no army, no revenue, and only the power of his personal example (which the ancient Romans would have called *auctoritas*, see chapter 3).

Orders of Poverty

In addition to the important reform orders originating at Cluny and Cîteaux, two important *new* monastic orders were founded in the thirteenth century: the Dominican Order and the Franciscan Order. Members of these new orders were (originally, at least) mendicants—that is, they begged for their food and owned no property, relying upon charity for their survival.

Dominican Order

Founded in 1216 by Dominic de Guzmán (1170–1221), the "Order of Preachers" received papal approval and established itself in Rome. Dedicated to study and preaching, Dominican monks spread into the Latin West, founding schools and teaching at the University of Paris and at Oxford (by 1221). The order included great scholars and great mystics. St. Thomas Aquinas (see above) was a Dominican friar, a doctor of the church, and one of its great mystics. By the mid-thirteenth century, the aid of the order was increasingly enlisted in suppressing heresy, and Dominicans formed the backbone of the Roman Inquisition. Dominicans would later play an active role in the extension of Christianity into newly discovered territories around the world (see chapter 6), including the Americas.

Franciscan Order

St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) founded this order and wrote its rule. The details of his personal life, some legendary, have left so deep an impression upon the order and upon Christianity itself that they deserve treatment here. Born into a family of wealthy textile merchants in Assisi (modern Italy), Francis lived a dissolute life as a youth—a lifestyle common among his peers. He fought in a war that pitted his native town of Assisi against the nearby city of Perugia in 1204, and was captured. He spent a good deal of time in deplorable prison conditions, and probably contracted malaria, which afflicted him for the rest of his life. Eventually ransomed, he returned home, but the reckless pleasures of his youth now appeared transitory and unappealing.

He experienced a spiritual crisis. While meditating upon a crucifix in the ruined church of San Damiano, he heard the voice of Christ tell him to "Rebuild my house." Taking the instruction literally at first, he took materials from his home and began rebuilding the church of San Damiano. His father, hearing of Francis's new religious activities, sought to bring the boy back around. Eventually, his father sued for the value of the materials donated to San Damiano. Appearing before the bishop of Assisi and his father, Francis removed his clothes, laid them at his father's feet, and went to the bishop, who covered Francis with his mantle—a sign that the church would thereafter shelter the young saint. Francis gathered a following among Italian youth who were seeking a deeper spiritual life. Known for clothing—and even touching—lepers and for preaching the Christian gospel to animals as well as to people, Francis's spiritual outlook and activities were memorialized in the Christian hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King." Francis's following became so great that, almost unintentionally, he ended up founding a new

monastic order and was compelled to write its rule in 1221. Legend holds that he was so filled with charity and so lacking in self-interest that he received the marks of crucifixion in his body, the *stigmata* of Christ. His order later fragmented over questions of poverty, but remained an important part of Roman Catholicism to this day.

Impact upon Culture

The widespread religious and spiritual impulses of the twelfth century—identified by Charles Homer Haskins—were not confined to reforms or the founding of new monastic orders, but found their way into art, architecture, and even literature. The number and variety of artistic accomplishments during the High Middle Ages is impressive, covering religious art, music, philosophy, natural sciences, and many related areas. Two areas, however, stand out for their lasting contributions: Gothic architecture and vernacular literature.

Gothic Architecture (1100–1500)

The principles of Gothic architecture produced some of the most famous churches in the Western world. Beginning in France, the influence of the new Gothic style spread to England, Germany, Spain, and most of Europe. Its characteristic features are the pointed arch, the ribbed vaulted ceiling, and the flying buttress. But its greatest ingenuity is found in its engineering. Most churches (the largest indoor buildings of the time) were Romanesque in style. The taller the Romanesque church became, however, the larger the interior support columns necessarily became. Eventually, as the buildings became taller and taller, a point would be reached where there was hardly any interior space left; the walls necessarily increased in thickness, and window space consequently diminished. Because of this difficulty, Romanesque churches were, comparatively, darker and smaller than Gothic ones. The originators of Gothic style, such as Suger of St. Denis (1081–1151), sought elevated interior space (symbolic of the ascent to heaven) and large windows allowing light inside (symbolic of the revealed glory and truth of God). The solution they discovered was to continue building smaller indoor pillars, but to create massive pillars, called buttresses, *outside* the church, along the exterior walls. The weight of the tall roof was distributed to these buttresses by means of a special connecting arch, called a "flying buttress." The flying buttress not only allowed for greater height, but also allowed for the construction of massive windows, often comprising as much as 50 percent of the exterior wall. Stained-glass windows came in one of two basic shapes: tall, arch-shaped lancets, and circular rose windows. For example, Chartres cathedral, famous for its stained glass, has three great rose windows as large as forty feet in diameter. The pointed arch, the ribbed ceiling vault, and the flying buttress became standard building features, allowing the weight of a building to be efficiently thrust outward and down, opening space and creating some of the most beautiful art of the High Middle Ages.

Vernacular Language and Literature

In addition to emerging innovations in architecture, vernacular language and literature—foundational elements in the construction of a national identity—emerged during the High Middle Ages. Latin, the dominant *academic* language of the age, eventually gave way to many of the European languages familiar today: French, English, German, and Italian. Dante Alighieri

(AD 1265–1321) argued convincingly (in Latin, no less) that vernacular languages should be the primary medium of writing, since they were "living" and evolving languages, capable of capturing the styles and meaning of the day better than ancient Latin. He wrote what may be considered the first great work of European vernacular poetry, the *Divine Comedy*. Written in his native Tuscan dialect, the *Comedy* consisted of three books (called *canticles*) divided into an even hundred *cantos* (chapters, basically) relating his personal spiritual journey through hell, Purgatory, and heaven in 14,233 lines of eleven-syllable poetry. He even invented his own rhyme scheme for the work, called *terza rima*. The work became the subject of university lectures by famous scholars such as Boccaccio in the early fourteenth century. Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400), the great poet of vernacular English, most famous for his *Canterbury Tales*, translated Dante (incompletely) into English. Both Italian and English owe a great deal of credit to Dante and Chaucer.

Other vernacular forms emerged as well, including the "Romance" poetry of France. Chrétien de Troyes (c. late twelfth century) wrote in Old French, almost exclusively on the subject of Arthurian legends (stories involving the fabled King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table). His works on Lancelot, Gawain, and Percival are widely considered forerunners of the modern novel, with developed characters and plotlines. These legends were very popular in the courts of Western Europe, as is evidenced by the multitude of surviving copies, many translated into other languages, further spurring the process of vernacularization. Additional vernacular works, often French, were composed and spread by *trouvères* (troubadours), who traveled from court to court armed with a lute (a guitar-like instrument of Arab origin, called in Arabic *al-Oud*, hence "lute"). Vernacular romance and troubadour lyric style helped produce a literary and musical alternative to religious music and scripture, contributing significantly to the emerging culture of chivalry prized by the noble class.

Crises of the Fourteenth Century

The social, economic, religious, and political changes of the High Middle Ages referenced above either produced or were accompanied by *unanticipated* events that increased disequilibrium. Collectively termed the "crises of the fourteenth century," they helped bring the era to a close and prepared the way for the establishment of modern Europe. These crises include the Avignon papacy, the Black Death, and the Hundred Years War.

The Avignon Papacy (1309–1376)

The successes enjoyed by the papacy following the Investiture Controversy led the church increasingly into what today we would call genuinely "secular" domains. Popes and higher clergy behaved increasingly like princes and kings, operated their ecclesiastical stewardships as kingdoms, and intervened actively and directly in the daily operation of monarchies and principalities. Tensions between the monarchs and ecclesiastical leaders mounted, particularly between Philip IV of France (r. 1285–1314) and Pope Boniface VIII (r. 1295–1303). Boniface attempted to coerce Philip, and King Philip responded by abducting the entire papacy, a sort of practical solution to lay investiture accomplished principally by kidnapping the papacy itself. The papacy was relocated to an area in modern France called Avignon. The next eight popes appointed at Avignon were—unsurprisingly—French, essentially

appointees of the French crown. The result was a diminishment of papal credibility outside of France and a crisis of spiritual authority.

The humanist philosopher Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374) first named the situation the "Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy," commenting that the church was now subject to "unholy Babylon, Hell on Earth, the sink of iniquity, the worldly cesspool, where there is neither faith, nor charity, nor religion itself" (Noble, 293). Although the papacy eventually returned to Rome, the damage done was not immediately remedied, but was unfortunately compounded by the Great Schism (not to be confused with the earlier Great East-West Schism of 1054). The Great Schism arose when rival ecclesiastical factions each appointed their own popes (who thereafter excommunicated one another). Eventually there were three claimants to the See of St. Peter, but the problem of multiple popes was eventually resolved. Between 1309 and 1417, the papacy had been in continual crisis, and its claims to spiritual supremacy were seriously damaged—a mere century before Martin Luther (1483–1546) would nail his famous ninety-five theses on a church door in Wittenberg, Germany, unwittingly inaugurating the Protestant Reformation.

The Black Death (1347–1349)

But the Avignon papacy was not the only Europe-wide crisis of the fourteenth century. Between 1347 and 1348, one of history's most virulent plagues swept westward from Constantinople into Italy, and thereafter spread through nearly all of Europe. The massive population increase and urbanization of the High Middle Ages, arguably a success in material terms, also produced the conditions necessary for the plague to spread as far and as quickly as it did. Had there been fewer people, living in more rural conditions, with less trade and contact, the plague might not have been as deadly or as widespread. Within a span of about two and a half years, up to one-third of the European population died, often painfully. The effects were, of course, even more deadly in some regions than in others. The plague is now thought to have been a *combination* of bacterial and viral diseases. The bubonic plague, a bacterial infection, is widely regarded as the primary source of the trouble. Traveling by means of fleas infesting rats, the bacterium likely spread to humans through the bite of the flea. Buboes, painfully swollen lymph glands appearing in the neck, armpits, or groin of victims, were a common sign of infection. Septicemia often set in when the buboes ruptured, and related hemorrhaging produced dark bruises on the victim's body—hence the name "Black Death." Contagious secondary viral infections, such as pneumonia, spread among the immune-stressed population.

The church responded by calling the plague the visitation of God's wrath upon sinners. However, when clergymen died in equal numbers as other folk, that claim turned back upon the church, the clergy, and religious authority itself. No class of society was spared the ravages of the plague. One of the many socioeconomic results of the Black Death was increased social mobility, particularly in England and France: there were not enough peasants left to farm the remaining productive lands. As a result, the most fertile land remained available for cultivation, and marginally productive lands were abandoned. Additionally, wages increased in light of the deadly decline in skilled labor. Connections with socioeconomic changes seem apparent enough, but some historians claim that the Black Death also opened the way for capitalism to take root.

The Hundred Years War (1337–1453)

The ongoing controversy between England and France over control of continental territories formerly held by the kings of England turned into protracted war in the fourteenth century. The Hundred Years War is often described in four phases:

Phase One (1337–1360)

Although England had a sizable population, the kings of France could muster far more troops. Nevertheless, both sides deployed large armies and increasingly relied upon rudimentary gunpowder-based technologies toward the end of the war. The English, smaller in number and operating in enemy territory, preferred hit-and-run raids and avoided pitched battles unless the odds were stacked in their favor. This tactic worked, and following the battles of Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356), the first phase ended with the English regaining control over much of Aquitaine.

Phase Two (1360–1396)

During this phase, the cost of the wars (both in monetary terms *and* in terms of human life) resulted in political turmoil. France underwent a series of revolts that threatened to topple the crown following the loss at Poitiers. And in England, tax increases prompted a rebellion in which Richard II (r. 1377–1399) was forced to abdicate the throne, and Parliament elected Henry IV (r. 1399–1413) to rule in his stead—the first elected king of England.

Phase Three (1396–1422)

English King Henry V (r. 1413–1422) took advantage of the periodic insanity of French King Charles VI (r. 1380–1422) and invaded France. Their armies eventually met at Agincourt in 1415 in one of the most famous battles in history. The field of battle near Agincourt was soaked following several days of near-constant rain. The French knights, numbering between fifteen thousand and thirty thousand according to modern estimates, charged across the plain and were soon bogged down in the mud and muck. The English (probably numbering between six to seven thousand) then unleashed their primary weapon, the Welsh longbow—deadly against even an armored knight at three hundred yards. The bodies of knights and horses piled up in the mud, and the battle became a bloodbath: as many as six thousand Frenchmen, mostly nobles, were slaughtered, while perhaps five hundred Englishmen, many commoners, perished. The longbow, wielded by commoners from Wales, proved superior to the mounted power of the French knight, symbol of European nobility and champion of chivalry and courtly manners. The days of the mounted noble seemed numbered: what is the use of having an expensive military caste, the *bellatores*, when commoners, *laboratores*, can defeat them? Just who is now protecting whom?

Phase Four (1422–1453)

This phase is dominated by the personality of Joan of Arc. Following the Siege of Orléans in 1429, the English not only controlled parts of Aquitaine, but also controlled nearly all of northern France, including Paris. There was little reason to believe that the French kingdom

would survive or that the English could be stopped. Joan (c. 1412–1431), a peasant from the region of Lorraine in what is now eastern France, inspired the resuscitation of the French kingdom. Claiming to have had visions from various Christian saints, particularly Saint Catherine, she helped created an ideal "France" that could be claimed by the rightful king of France, thus contributing to the establishment of a French national identity. She was wounded and eventually captured by the English. Tried as a heretic for her numerous visions of saints, she was physically examined to prove that she was in fact a virgin maid, was subjected to other depravations, and was threatened with torture. She temporarily denied having received visions, but later recanted and was burned at the stake at age nineteen. Although nineteenth-century observers often saw her as a monarchist, she was the champion of nationalism and French identity, reclaiming France for the French. She subsequently became the subject of literature and music, assuming a larger-than-life popular status.

Eventually the English were forced to withdraw, and over one hundred years after the wars began, the final borders looked almost identical to the ones from before the war, except that the English now controlled no land on the continent except for a small area around Calais near the English Channel.

Conclusion

Conventional wisdom customarily views the High Middle Ages as a continuation of the backwardness of the so-called "Dark Ages," a stagnant period that contributed little to modern Western civilization. Although there were social, economic, and political factors indicating an ongoing equilibrium, perhaps even a stagnation of sorts, the transformations and innovations that occurred proved fundamental to the creation of modern Europe. Arguably, Christendom was on the verge of losing its cohesion, and the separation of church and state was widening apace through the adaptation of Roman law and the creation of common law by university-trained professionals. The first national states, England and France, were emerging, and human reason was increasingly employed alongside traditional authority to resolve theological issues. The ideal tripartite class structure, *bellatores*, *oratores*, and *laboratores*, was stressed to its limit, beginning the process of political transformation leading to the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and beyond through World War I. The balance of this narrative is, to a significant degree, the story of how the changes made in the High Middle Ages played out during the next five centuries.

CHAPTER 8

Exploration, Renaissance, and Reformation

Following the light of the sun, we left the old world.
—Christopher Columbus

Introduction

This chapter covers the period of time between 1450 and 1648. The reasons for selecting these particular dates will be spelled out below. For now we should spend a little time linking the trends discussed in chapters 4 and 5 to the themes of this chapter—exploration, renaissance, and reformation.

The factors promoting change (i.e., the "factors of disequilibrium" discussed in chapter 5) not only continued during this period, but *intensified*, producing what may be called a crisis of authority in European civilization. In the next few paragraphs, we will investigate briefly two important ways in which these factors of disequilibrium prompted the crisis of authority. First, the power of Western European rulers, particularly the monarchs of England, France, and Spain, increased both at the expense of the power of the aristocratic nobility and at the expense of the power of the church. Second, social changes resulting from the urban expansion of specialized labor, the rise of university-trained professional bureaucracies, and the increased number of *commerçants* did not fit the tidy tripartite categories of "those who pray," "those who fight," and "those who work land," and put pressure upon the feudal classifications of society and their accompanying privileges.

We saw in chapter 5 how increased trade promoted disequilibrium in the politics and society of Europe during the High Middle Ages. First, towns multiplied in number, providing monarchs alternative sources of direct revenue through increased taxation. Second, the number of specialized artisans located in and near towns increased, as did the number of *commerçants*, who were invaluable to monarchs but did not fit into the three classes of medieval society. Third, universities supplied professional bureaucrats unaffiliated with either the nobility or the church, allowing monarchs to increasingly operate independently of the church. Remember that *monasteries* had previously supplied the bureaucrats that *universities* increasingly came to supply, eroding the church-state dependency formed during the rise of Christendom.

The consolidation and centralization of power and subsequent crises of authority continued during the following time periods covered in *this* chapter.

Exploration

Several factors combined to promote European voyages of exporation, that is, ventures across the high seas in search of direct trade routes. The plagues of the fourteenth century effectively closed the Silk Road, intermittently cutting-off European access to Eastern goods. The conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in AD 1453 guaranteed Muslim/Turkish domination of Asian trade routes, prompting some Western Europeans to look for new sources and new markets. Additionally, European nations, particularly those with warm-wate ports

located the furthes from traditional mostly overland spices routes (such as Portugal, Spain, the Low Countries, and England) were motivated to seek direct access to spices, silks, and other commodities. Western European nations invested more and more resources into explorations well beyond the Mediterranean basin. At first, the risks and costs of exploration were comparatively modest, suchas thee Portuguese explorations along the coasts of nearby Africa, but beginning with the voyages of Columbus agross the high seas and great Atlantic Ocean, the risks and costs rose exponentially: from the European perspective, the investment in these high-rick venture paid off, and sometimes paid handsomely.

Portuguese Explorations

The process of Western-European exploration began in earnest with the Portuguese, particularly with Prince Henry of Portugal (d. 1460, soubriquet "The Navigator"). Under Henry's patronage the Portuguese took the islands of Madeira and the Azores in the Atlantic Ocean—providing additional ports for refitting a resupllying a new forms of sailing ship invented under Henry's supervision, called the Caraval. The conquest of Ceuta in 1415, a port city located on the North African coast near Gibraltar, encouraged further exlorations along the African cost in search for increased access to gold, ivory, slaves, and other "goods." By the time of his death in 1460 CE, Henry's explorers had rounded the hump of West Afcrica, and travelled as far as Sierra Leone. Henry and his cartographers and explorers extablished trading postas along the way, and thus had laid the foundations for further Portuguese explorations of Africa.

In order to proceed further along the African coast, Portuguese explorers would soon have to cross the equator, which meant the complete loss of Polaris, the North Star, to view. In Sierra Leone, located at a mere 8° of northern latitude, a large wave could temporarily hide the North Star from view, rendering some customary nighttime navigational techniques less reliable. The equator formed a navigational "edge of the world," not in a litteral sense, but in the sense that any ship losing sight of the coast near or below the equator might be in jeopardy. Nevertheless, so long as the African coast was in sight, navigation southward along could proceed. The Equator was corssed in 1474, and in 1488 the famous explorer Bartolomeeo Dias (1450-1500) readhed the Cape of Good Hope, the sourthernmost regions of the African Concintent, and the crossing point from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. Explorations then proceeded northward along Africa's Indian Oceant Coast culminating in the "discovery" of India by Vasco da Gama (1460-1524) in 1497-98, adding direct access to Indian tade goods, in addition to those of Africa. More about the Portuguese and other European powers is discussed in Chapter 18. In the race to discover new lands and exploit direct trade, the Portuguese had established a clear lead. The Portuguese were African explorers, traders, and conquerors, but not large-scale colonizers as such.

Other European Nations Explore the World

Other rulers and nations subsequently acquired vast domains in Africa, the Americas, the Pacific, and other parts of the globe. These new territories provided sources of wealth in the form of tax revenues, raw materials for manufacturing, markets for finished goods, and sources of labor, including slave labor. European emigrants, particularly the English, and to a lesser degree the French, relocated in distant lands (i.e., "colonized"), spreading Western civilization, religion, and culture abroad. Consequently, local peoples and customs were often faced with the undesirable choice of adapting or perishing. Some cultures adapted, and others were obliterated. Because the stories of Spanish exploration, conquest, and rule of in the Americas, including

Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés, and Francisco Pizarro are presented in Chapter 19, they are omitted here, with the exception of Ferdinand Magellan (1480-1521, below). Instead a brief space is dedicdated here to the early efforts of the English, French, and Dutch, and the rise of mercantilism following our discussion of Ferdinand Magellan. Unfortunately space does not permit mention of dozens of other European explorers, including Amerigo Vespucci, Ponce de Leon, Coronado, Balboa, and many, many others.

Ferdinand Magellan

Magellan is perhaps second only in rank of European Exploerer's to Christopher Columbus. Although many—if not most—educated people from ancient times and through the Middle Ages knew or suspected that the earth was "round" (i.e., a sphere), Magellan was the first to prove it by sailing around the eart, or "Circumnativgating" the globe in 1520-21. By way of trivia, the US Apollo 8 astronauts took a photo of the first "earthrise"m on Christmas Eve in 1968, a partially lit earth rising over a barren moon, and the Apollo 17 space mission took the famous 1972 "Blue Marble" photo of the entire lit-up earth from outer space, demonstrating that not only was the earth spherical, it was a tiny, small, oasis of life visibly alone in a vast and expanding universe. Back to Magellan. Comissioned by Charles I of Spain (see chapter 8), Megallan took a fleet of five ships southwestward across the Atlantic Ocean, through the eponymous Straits of Magellan, and into what he named the Peaceful, or "Pacific" Ocean. Although as series of stroms and mutinies almost ended the mission, and Magellan himself died in the Philipines in 1521, the remainder of his expedition returned after sixteen months of travel in 1522, having travelled more than 25,000 miles. The successful voyage came at a high price for Magellan and the crew, with the loss of all but one ship (aptly named *Victoria*) and 232 lives. Nevertheles, a new vision of the globe was opened up: an unimaginably vast territory to be explored, and, of course, conquered.

English Explorations

The Spanish and Portuguese have already established themselves firmly in Central and South America (Chapter 19), the English and Dutch explorations wiere mostly aimed at the norther Atlantic in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This would change as the Spanish and Portuguese nations and economies were weakened in the seventeenth century. The English had already been trading with Iceland by the early fifteenth century, and this trade introduced them to tales of the Newfoundland coast. In 1497, John Cabot (1450-1500), under thepatronage of the English Crown, explored about 400 miles of the Newfoundland coast, travelling as far as Cape Breton (parts of modern Canada). His Son, Sebastian Cabot (1474-1557), explored further South, as far as Cape Cod, located in modern Massachussetts.

In the sixteenth century English Martin Frobisher (1535-94) made the first earnest attempt to discover a northwest passage 'above' (i.e., North of) North America. Just as Columbus sought to circumvent the achievements of the Portuguese in rounding Afria to India by locating a direct route to China and India, so to these English explorers were commissions to find another possible direct route: the famed Northwest Passage, a way north of the North American continent and into the Pacific Ocean.

Frobisher made three voyages northward. The Muscovy Company of England privately funded Frobisher's first voyage (1576). He departed with three ships but one was completely lost at sea, a second had to be abandoned in disrepair. He completed the voyage inn the third, called the *Labrador*, discovereding the eponymous Frobisher Bay, and Baffin Island (where European

contact with Inuits was first made), before returning, since further exploration was completely blocked by sea ice. The second voyage (1577) was funded by the Company of Cathay, included a groups of miners and refiners, and received some financial support from Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603). the voyage was intended to exploit existing discoveryies, search for ores or other valuable raw materials, eventually returning to Englan with several tons of ore samples, a large and curious black stone, and three captured Inuits: a father, mother, and child, all of whom died within a year. Frobisher's third voyage (1588) was a large enterprise, with fifteen ships, commissioned to discover and exploit any resources associated with the early voyages, and to found a colony of about 100 persons. Weather and discontent among the intended settleers resulted in the sinking of ships and a failure to establish a colony. A mistake in navigation led Frobisher into what was later called Hudson Bay (known as 'Mistaken Bay" by Frobisher and others until "rediscovered" by Henry Hudson (1565-1611) in 1610, and renamed Hudson Bay).

Although Hudson and Sir John Davis (1550-1605) made considerable discoveries mapping the eastern coast of Norrtth America, locating the Hudson River, the Hudson passage, and Hudson Bay, the Northwest Passage remained unattaibale by the English. Nevertheless, England was able, through a combination of corporate funding and Royal support, to establish successful colonies in Virginia and Massachusetts, providing the continental foothold necessary to dominate the Eastern Seaboard. Although a prior expedition to colonize Virginia (e.g., the Roanoake Colony) failed, the Company of London successfully funder the colonization fo Jamestown, located in modern Virginia in 1607. Argualy, it is in Jamestwon that the British Empire originated. The Plymouth Company, another English joint stock corporation, funded the successful Massachussetts Bay Colony in 1620.

The English combination of largely privately-funded exploration with Royal patronage and consent became an important feature of the mercantile system of exploration and colonization.

Mercantilism

Mercantilism is a theory of national and economic power that, in addition to existing claims of political and diplomatic power through Absolutism, granted nations and monarchies control over vast resources resulting largely from overseas exploration and the establishment of national empires through colonization. Mercantilism was the dominant theory and method of colonial exploitation and diplomacy from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Important features of Mercantilism include:

- Exploration, conquest, and colonization (i.e., moving a nations own people to the conquered territories in significant, self-sustaining numbers)
- Monopolization of colonial markets (either outright prohibition of a competing nation's merchant vessels (e.g., the English Navigation Acts of 1651) or through the establishment of "Staple Ports")
- Bullionism ("bullion" here refers to precious metals used as a form of wealth, primarly gold and silver, and is opposed to the use of paper money or other forms of currency), meaning the hoard of precious metals within a nation's economy while seeking trade relations that depleted a rival nation of its bullion
- Subsidizing the production and extraction of raw materials in colonies for the production of finished goods in the home nation

- Limiting or prohibiting the purchase of finished goods in the colonies to anything other than goods produced by the home nation (monopoly on finished goods in colonial markets)

Although mercantilism functioned well-enough in the economic conditions of the time, it led to international competition and war in many cases, as nations fought over colonial territory and markets. Some aspects of mercantilism have endured in the popular imagination today, such as bullionism. Among of the major impediments to bullionism in contemporary economie are (1) limited supply, involving areas with higher gold or silver (or diamonds for that matter) in international entrigue and war, and, (2) the lack of an absolute value for buillion, it being a commodity subject to undependable market fluctuations renderinging an undependable basis for modern economic and monetary policy. Billionism in fact, helped ruin the economies of several empires due to the fluctuations of its market value and its inflationary effects as more and more silver and gold were imported into Europe: two primary examples beings Spain and the Ottoman Empire.

Mercantilist Trade Companies

Several powerful international trade companies were founded in the seventeenth century. These include the Dutch East india Company (founded 1602), The Duth West Indies Company (1621) and, the French East India Company (1664). Perhaps the most famous (or infamous) was the British East India Company (1599, originally known simply as The East India Company).

British East India Company (1599-1874)

Given a royal monopoly on trade in the general region of South and East Asia, the BEIC soon came into conflict with other nations over control of trade and the exercise political hegemony on the Indian subcontinent. Following a victory over the Portuguese in 1612 at Surat, the company secured a trade monopoly over the region (near modern Gujarat) from Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627, see Chapter 17): The BEIC gained a monopoly over external trade form Surat, and the Emperor received European luxury goods in return. Having secured Mughal patronage, the BEIC soon gained control over former Portuguese trading cities such as Goa and Mumbai (Bombay). In 1671 the BEIC secured a monopoly over trade in the region of Bengal. By the end of the seventeenh century the company had secured monopolies on the Indian coasts of the Arabian Sea and oi the Bay of Bengal. Over the next centuries the BEIC would weaken and help end the Mughal Empire, as well as the political careers of other local rulers in India. BEIC power and monopoly was not limited to India, but moved in China with the conquest of Lintin Island and portions of the Canton (the region of Hong Kong).

BEIC wars and eventual demise

As the wealth and power of the BEIC grew is became in effect a ‘government within a government (i.e., Britain), with its own army and its own navy. In 1750 the Company had around 3,000 soldiers. In 1856-7 a conflict known as the Sepoy Mutiny by the British, and as the Revolution of 1857 by Indian nationalists, resulted in the termination of the Mughal dynasty and the raiseing of a BEIC army of about 280,00 troops. The balance of global power in the Indian and East Pacific oceans rested more in the hands of the BEIC’s armies and navies than it did in those of any single nation, including Great Britain itself. Not only had the Company fought wars and helped cause widespread rebelleion in India, but was responsible for the lucrative trade in

opium, and the first Opium War with China (1839-42) and the Second Opium War (1856-60). The involvement in unanticipated large-scale wars caused by the BEIC was something the British government coud no longer tolerate.

By 1860 the BEIC 'government within a government' had become more of a liability than a benefit to the United Kingdom. At that time, Britain was involved in a global conflict called the Seven Years' War (1856-63) or French-Indian War in its limited and comparatively insignificant North American Theater). French losses in India, and the need for their military in other places, drove them from the subcontinent. Over the next decade and a half, the British took complete control of India by dissolving in BEIC by an act of Parliament (Pitt's India Act of 1784), and the creation of the British Raj (1858-1947), proclaiming Quesctoria the Empress of India in 1876. By the time the BEIC ended, global trade and economics had rendered the mercanlist system obsolete, and the creation of the British Raj marked a significant milestone in its place, namely, the rise of imperialism.

Capitalism

Exploration, colonization, and mercantilism eventually combined by the end of the eighteenth century to promote the growth of modern capitalism, even though capilatism is in key respets opposed to certain aspects of mercantilism. Key features of Capitalism include:

- Protection of private property from undue governmental regulation or common ownership
- Capital accumulation through stock markets or trade markets providing the enormous amounts of money necessary to invest in truly large-scale private projects, such as factories, railroads, or shipping lines
- The use of the legal fiction called the corporation, using the sale of stock to finance the corporation, and its legal treatment as a "person" to protect investors, officers, and directors from legal liability for corporate debt (the so-called "corporate veil")
- Competition and free trade, replacing mercantilist monopoly and government regulation
- Private ownership of the means of production (corporations, companies, partnerships, or individuals own a run business and production of good, not the government, and should be left free from government regulation or interference); in theory, free competition would provide the consumer best product at the best price, the effect of Adam Smith's (Seee chapter 9) "invisible hand," or what could be called swelf-interest or greed.

Capitalism, with its free markets and open trade, not only largely replaced mercantilism by European colonial nations and the nascent United States in the early nineteenth century, but ushered in new theories of diplomacy and international competition, a system known as imperialsm (see chapter 11 for a very brief discussion of the effects of imperial competition on the origins of World War One).

Renaissance

The term *Renaissance* has somewhat fallen into academic disfavor, in part because it gives the mistaken impression that the previous period from about AD 476 to about AD 1450 was one of continuous stagnation, darkness, and superstition. Hopefully chapters 4 and 5 have disabused the reader of these notions: remember the Carolingian Renaissance of the ninth

century and Charles Homer Haskins's renaissance of the twelfth century (see above). There have been many renaissances in the course of Western civilization. The phrase "Late Middle Ages" is more commonly used these days to describe this period, instead of the more familiar "Renaissance." This chapter, however, uses the term "Renaissance" primarily because it provides a familiar framework to discuss the increasingly secular social and intellectual transformations of Italy and northern Europe immediately preceding the Protestant Reformation, and which ultimately contributed to the political and industrial revolutions of the nineteenth century (chapter 8). So long as the reader keeps in mind that this was one of several renaissances in the history of Europe, then the term is useful.

The Renaissance concept of humanism, in particular, provided a new source of what would eventually come to be called "secular" authority: a radically new conceptualization of, and justification for, human existence, with no necessary religious foundation. In other words, humanism allowed for the conscious and intentional reconceptualization of ethics, morality, and justice without reliance upon clergy, sacraments, scripture, or the dictates of God. Although secularism took several centuries to fully develop after its beginnings in the High Middle Ages, this was a significant challenge to Christendom and to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. The literature, art, music, and theater of that day were strongly influenced by humanism and constitute a core aspect of Western civilization.

Reformation

The Protestant Reformation, which arguably became permanent after 1517, divided Europe into two general camps (often military camps). First, some rulers sought independence from church involvement and oversight—for example, the King of England often supported the Reformation not for deeply religious reasons, but because protests against traditional religious authority weakened the papacy and brought religion more under royal control. Second, another category of rulers joined *with* the Catholic response to the Reformation, called the "Counter-Reformation." These rulers, such as the kings and queens of Spain and France, cooperated with an increasingly pliant papacy and gained increased control over religion without supporting Protestantism. The politics of religious tension culminated in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). One may wonder why these events occurred at this time, and not earlier. One answer is that both the Renaissance and the Reformation were facilitated by new inventions that connected peoples living faraway and that spread ideas—such as movable-type printing, developed between about 1440 and 1450 largely by Johannes Gutenberg (d. 1468). Printing led to increased literacy, a necessary condition for the dissemination of the ideas of humanism and the message of Protestantism.

By 1648, the rulers of the major nations of Western Europe were not only largely independent of the church and the nobility, but exercised near-absolute authority within their realms. Society was increasingly open and increasingly literate. This also facilitated powerful scientific and academic changes affecting the modern world. The most extreme political result, called royal absolutism, and the intellectual results, including the scientific revolution, will be discussed in chapter 7.

The Age of Exploration

Between about 1450 and 1650, Western Europe became increasingly aware of, and increasingly involved with, the rest of the globe. This new relationship was given impetus by a series of expeditions inaugurating an "Age of Exploration." These expeditions will be discussed in greater detail below. First, however, the reader must understand how they were an extension of and were built upon previous contact and prior expeditions conducted in the High Middle Ages. This emphasizes the fact that the Age of Exploration formed part of a continuity, rather than an abrupt transformation in European behavior and policy.

The Muslim Middle East and the Byzantine Empire

In chapter 4 we reviewed how the first four crusades brought Europeans (mostly from the regions of France) into contact with the Muslim states of what is now called the Middle East, and that these extended contacts prompted increased trade with Asia, both through the aid of Muslim intermediaries and through the help of Christians in Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire. These trade relationships changed dramatically with the conquest of Constantinople by an emerging Muslim state later known as the Ottoman Empire. Building upon the earlier Turkish conquest of Asia Minor after 1071 (see chapter 4), a new Turkish dynasty emerged under the leadership of a warlord named Osman (rendered as "Ottoman" in European languages). Beginning with Osman in the 1290s, his heirs would gradually conquer Asia Minor and move into Europe. Once in Europe, the Ottomans gradually conquered the European territories of the Byzantine Empire until only a very small area around the great city of Constantinople itself remained of the once-powerful Roman Empire in the east. Following a long siege, in which the Ottomans demonstrated their emerging mastery of gunpowder technologies through the use of massive artillery, the city fell on Tuesday, May 29, 1453. The Ottomans made Constantinople the capital of their empire and renamed the city Istanbul. This ended ongoing European trade with Asia, often conducted through the Byzantines as intermediaries, and prompted Western Europeans to seek direct trade routes with China, India, and Indonesia.

Trade Expeditions during the High Middle Ages

The Italian city-states of Venice and Genoa had previously profited directly from Asian trade through the Middle East (beginning with the Crusades), but that would change following the fall of Constantinople. The potential for trade-based wealth prompted several Italians to attempt direct contact with China, beginning in about 1241. Marco Polo completed the most famous of these trade expeditions that occurred between 1254 and 1324. Departing in 1271, he traveled to the city of Akko (now called Acre, located in modern Israel) and made his way across Persia, eastward along the Silk Road, and across Central Asia to Beijing. There, over the course of nearly twenty years, he became acquainted with the famous Emperor Kublai Khan of the Yuan dynasty. Polo later returned to Europe, traveling mostly by sea from Hangchow across the South China Sea, across the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, finally landing at Hormuz, in Persia, from where he returned essentially by the same way he had gone. The scope and duration of Polo's travels made him one of the greatest geographers in history. He published a record of his expedition in a book called *Livres des merveilles du monde* (*Book of the Marvels of the World*). Although Polo's expedition did not result in large-scale direct trade with East Asia during his lifetime, the book was read in great detail and with great interest by a later trade

explorer and fellow Italian: Christopher Columbus, whose travels were an extension of explorations undertaken by the Portuguese beginning in the fifteenth century.

Portuguese Expeditions

Portugal sought, under the patronage of Prince Henry (1394–1460, soubriquet: "the Navigator"), to expand its control of trade southward into Africa and, it was hoped, beyond to India. A series of Portuguese expeditions led to the establishment of trading stations along the West African coast, some of which, such as Sierra Leone, still bear Portuguese names. The Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias (1451–1500), employing a new lateen-sail design used on a ship called a "caravel," succeeded in rounding the southern tip of Africa in AD 1488, opening the way to India. Another Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama (1460–1524), reached India, and in 1510 a permanent Portuguese trading port was established in Goa. Direct trade between Europe and Asia—without going through the Middle East—was now possible. The Portuguese thus established an early lead over other European nations seeking direct access to Asia, such as Spain.

The Emergence of Spain

We reviewed the emergence of two powerful centralized European nation-states in chapters 4 and 5: England and France. We now add Spain to that list. In order to understand and appreciate the emergence of Spain as both a European and a world power, we require some additional historical background.

Muslim Iberia (711–1492)

Chapter 4 discussed briefly the Muslim conquest of most of the Iberian Peninsula. Beginning in 711, Muslim forces crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and by AD 732 had conquered about 90 percent of the area, including parts of southern France (principally the area of Narbonne). A strong Muslim state was established in Spain during the time of the Umayyad dynasty (AD 661–750), which eventually established its Iberian capital in Córdoba. A dynamic society comprised of Muslims, Jews, and Christians flourished under the Umayyads of Spain, and Córdoba became a city of fabled prosperity and stability. Several historians have called the period of time when most of the Iberian Peninsula was under Muslim rule *la convivencia* ("The Coexistence"). Jewish civilization arguably reached its apex under Muslim rule, producing renowned philosophers and theologians such as Moses Maimonides (1135–1204, Arabic name: *Musa bin Maimun*), who wrote in both Hebrew and Arabic. The phrase *la convivencia* does not indicate, however, that these groups got along in perfect peace and harmony. Instead, the three groups *coexisted* to a much higher degree under Muslim rule than they would once Christian rulers took control of the Iberian Peninsula in the late fifteenth century—and the Christian monarchs (Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon) drove the last Muslim rulers, the Nasrid emirs of Granada, from the peninsula in 1492.

The "Reconquista"

This eventual triumph of Christian kingdoms occurred over a period of more than seven hundred years and came to be called *la reconquista* ("the reconquest"). Christian rulers maintained a precarious political existence in the extreme northern regions of the Iberian Peninsula following the Umayyad conquests of 711 through 715, principally in the remote areas of the Asturias and the Pyrenees mountains. Over the course of about three centuries, five principal Christian kingdoms emerged, moving southward and slowly taking territory from increasingly fragmented Muslim states. The ultimate fate of the Muslim kingdoms was determined in 1212, at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, although it took nearly three hundred more years to eliminate the last Muslim kingdom. By the mid-fifteenth century, two principal Christian kingdoms had emerged in Iberia that together would become "Spain"—Castile (Spanish, "Castilla") and Aragon. In January 1492, the last ruler of Muslim Granada (named Boabdil, r. 1482–1492) surrendered the city to the combined forces of Queen Isabella of Castile (r. 1474–1504) and King Ferdinand V of Aragon (r. 1474–1516). At virtually the same time the *reconquista* was completed, the *convivencia* ended conclusively, a casualty of nascent Spanish nationalism.

Spanish Proto-Nationalism

Ferdinand and Isabella, known as *Los Reyes Católicos* ("The Catholic Kings"), initiated a policy of national consolidation and cultural uniformity in connection with the last stages of the *reconquista*. Although they ruled two completely separate kingdoms in law, they collaborated to govern them, in fact, as a unified kingdom. There were, however, several legal and practical obstacles to unified rule. The powerful nobility and towns of Spain enjoyed centuries-old privileges that limited the power of the crown. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of their subjects were not Christian, which limited the power of the church—and hence also the power of the crown—over them. Isabella secured a grant of authority from the pope in AD 1478, which allowed her to organize the Spanish Inquisition—meaning that she could appoint her own inquisitor general and conduct trials for heresy throughout Castile.

From a modern point of view this may not seem much of a grant of power, but in the context of late-fifteenth-century Spain it was significant. First, Isabella could now bring townsmen and nobles under her legal authority in spite of traditional privileges, not because the privileges ended, but because they could be tried and convicted as religious heretics. Second, the Jews and Muslims of Spain were forced to convert to Catholicism, ending their religious separation and making them subject to the authority of the Spanish Inquisition as well. The Inquisition not only had the power to identify and try heretics, but if convicted, could confiscate their property and, under certain circumstances, could execute them by means of burning at the stake or punish them through a sentence of dangerous manual labor. With the creation of the Inquisition and the forced conversion of remaining Jews (and later of all Muslims), all persons in Castile came under the direct authority of Isabella and the crown—by means of the Inquisition.

Forced Conversion of Jews

In March 1492, less than three months after the conquest of Granada, a royal edict forced the Jews of Spain to either convert to Catholicism or flee the country. Thousands converted, but other thousands chose exile (which in many cases meant effectively choosing death). And conversion, unfortunately, did not necessarily result in acceptance by or assimilation into

Christian society. Called *conversos* ("converts"), former Jews were often regarded as crypto-Jews rather than as genuine Christians. Hundreds were burned at the stake by order of the Inquisition in the coming decades.

Forced Conversion of Muslims

Muslims living in Castile were forced to become Christians in 1502. Like their formerly Jewish counterparts, they were not accepted or assimilated into Christian society. Considered crypto-Muslims, they too were tried and punished for heresy by the Inquisition, and thousands were sentenced to labor in the oar galleys of the Spanish Armada, or later on, in the mercury mines at Almaden. Such sentences were effectively a death sentence in many cases.

Spanish National Unity

Although Isabella and Ferdinand did not rule a legally unified Spain, their heir, Charles V (1500–1556), did. Charles was the legitimate ruler of much of Europe, being a rightful descendant to the holdings of the House of Hapsburg (Austria and the Holy Roman Empire), the House of Valois (Burgundy and the Netherlands), and the House of Trastámara (Castile and Aragon). When Charles ascended the thrones of Castile and Aragon in AD 1516, he became the first king of "Spain" and inherited a uniformly Christian nation (albeit through forced conversions). Thus, although he was Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, he was also Charles I of Spain. During the course of the next century, Spain would become the preeminent power on the continent, and, indeed, in the world. The explorations and conquests discussed below, beginning with Columbus in 1492 and continuing with Cortés and Pizarro during the reign of Charles V, should be viewed in large measure as an expansion of Spanish national (i.e., religious) uniformity. Not only did the armies and merchants of Spain travel across the seas and establish the world's first multihemispheric empire, but the practice of forced conversions, the church, and the Inquisition went as well.

Spanish Exploration and Conquest

The subject of Spanish exploration and conquest is complex and deserves greater treatment than can be given here. We must content ourselves with a cursory review of the most critical events in the exploration, conquest, and colonization of the western hemisphere by Spain.

Columbus and the "Discovery" of the Americas

Trained as a navigator, cartographer, and captain, Columbus was given permission by Queen Isabella to explore in a westward direction in the hope of finding a direct sea route to China. Although popular myth often claims that Columbus was the first European to believe that the world was "round," that is not entirely true: educated people then—and in the centuries before—generally believed the earth to be spherical. It was the *size* of the globe that was in doubt. Based upon calculations derived from ancient Greek texts and other sources, Columbus (incorrectly) concluded that the circumference of the earth was several thousand miles less than it actually was, putting China much closer to Spain. Equipped by Isabella with three ships (the famous *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa María*) and backed by royal and private financing, Columbus

arrived on October 12, 1492, at an island in the Caribbean Sea that he named San Salvador (part of the Bahamas). We now know that Leif Ericson (a Viking explorer, ca. 970s-1020) had reached a region likely near Newfoundland in about 1000, thereby becoming the first European to reach the Americas. Europeans were unaware of this, and Columbus was long regarded as the first to discover the western hemisphere. Columbus led subsequent explorations, bringing other areas of the Caribbean to the knowledge of Europe. The year 1492 was indeed eventful for Spain: the last Muslims were defeated, the Jews were forced to convert, *and* a New World was discovered. Spain was quick to claim the territories of the New World.

Hernán Cortés and the Conquest of Aztec Mexico

The explorations and exploits of Hernán Cortés (1485–1547), a Spaniard of the lesser nobility, merit mention. In February 1519, Cortés, in command of five hundred men and eleven ships, landed on the Yucatán Peninsula (in modern Mexico), then largely under Mayan domination. Once there, he scuttled his ships (i.e., destroyed them, probably by burning), giving his men strong incentive to abandon any thought of returning to Spain and to follow his orders. He claimed the land for Spain. He eventually made his way to the city of Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec Empire ruled by Montezuma II (r. 1502–1519, also called Moctezuma II). In letters to King Charles V, Cortés claimed that the Aztecs considered him an emissary of a feathered serpent-god, Quetzalcoatl, or perhaps even considered him as the god himself. Cortés managed to arrest Montezuma and take direct control of the Aztec state. In 1519, Charles V appointed Cortés governor of New Spain (*España Nueva*). Subsequently, the Spanish crown expanded its holdings in Mexico, and New Spain became a Spanish viceroyalty (a territory governed directly by a representative of the king, called a "viceroy"), lasting until 1821.

Francisco Pizarro and the Conquest of Peru

Francisco Pizarro (ca. 1476 to 1541) landed in what is now northern Peru in 1530. Moving inland, he faced and defeated the armies of Atahualpa (r. 1532–1533), last ruler of the Incan Empire. Pizarro briefly held Atahualpa captive and controlled the Incan state through him, but Atahualpa was later executed. Pizarro founded the city of Lima in 1535, which became the capital of New Castille (*Castilla Nueva*). Pizarro became the first governor of New Castille but was assassinated in 1541 following a brief civil war with a rival conquistador. Charles V subsequently incorporated New Castille into the viceroyalty of Peru (1542–1824). In 1570, a successor of the Spanish Inquisition was established in Lima, and the Peruvian Inquisition operated in the region until abolished in 1820.

Other Explorations

European knowledge concerning the globe expanded following Columbus's famous voyages. The Spaniard Vasco Nuñez de Balboa (ca. 1475–1519), for example, crossed the Isthmus of Panama in 1513, discovering the Pacific Ocean. The Portuguese Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) led a fleet of ships in an attempt to circumnavigate the entire globe—and although he was killed en route, one ship, the *Victoria*, completed the journey in 1522. Eventually English, Dutch, Russian, and other explorers joined in the pursuit of overseas profit and colonies.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, England and the Netherlands joined in exploration and colonization. They made effective use of "joint-stock companies" (a forerunner of the modern corporation) to accumulate the massive investment capital necessary for exploration. These companies (often established by means of royal charters, see chapter 5) secured royal permission to explore and colonize for overseas profit. Examples include the British East India Company (1600–1874), which effectively acted as a de facto government, trading in goods such as indigo, cotton, silk, and—eventually—opium. Other "East India" companies included the Dutch East India Company (founded 1602), the Danish East India Company (f. 1616), the Portuguese East India Company (f. 1628), the French East India Company (f. 1664), and the Swedish East India Company (f. 1731). Numerous "West India" companies were formed as well, operating in and around the Caribbean Sea: Dutch (f. 1621), Danish (f. 1659), French (f. 1664), and Swedish (f. 1787). British investors—in yet another example of colonization through joint-stock companies—secured royal charters for the Virginia Company of London (f. 1606, the company that established the Jamestown colony in 1607) and the Plymouth Company (f. 1606, which established the Plymouth colony in 1620). By the late eighteenth century, European exploration had established significant mercantile control over many parts of the globe and had established colonies on every other inhabited continent.

The Columbian Exchange

Western civilization itself was also spread around the globe by means of exploration and colonization. But the process worked both ways by means of the Columbian Exchange (named after Columbus). Europeans not only took large quantities of precious metals (principally gold and silver) back to Europe, they also took new plants such as maize (corn), the potato, and the tomato. (They unfortunately took back diseases, too, such as syphilis.) In turn, Europeans introduced new things to the New World, including domesticated animals such as horses, pigs, and donkeys. They also brought a wide variety of Old World plants, such as almonds, bananas, cantaloupe, and coffee.

The Columbian Exchange exercised a pronounced demographic effect. Like their New World counterparts, Europeans, in turn, brought new diseases to the Americas for which native peoples had no natural immunities, particularly smallpox and measles. And European diseases proved catastrophic: some historians estimate that up to 90 percent of native populations were wiped out by disease within a few decades of European arrival. In an extreme example, about twenty-two million people lived in the region of Mexico when Cortés arrived in 1519. Within twenty years, about two million were left. On an even darker note, the Columbian Exchange also involved the forced mass exportation of Africans to the New World. And although slavery had been practiced throughout human history, it had never been practiced on such a scale over such a protracted period of time, nor had it culminated in the widespread theories and practices of racism. Between AD 1650 and 1850, nearly ten million Africans were put into slavery and transported to the New World. Some colonies proved more deadly for slaves than others. For example, the life expectancy of a West African slave sent to Jamaica to work on sugar plantations was between a rather short six to seven years. The cruelties of slavery—forced separation from family, extreme hardships endured while crossing the Atlantic Ocean, and years of hard labor, define a dark period in both African and European history.

The Renaissance

The period of time commonly known as the European Renaissance began at about the same time as the era of European exploration. The term *renaissance* was a later invention, however, and was not used by contemporaries to describe their own times. By the 1820s, European scholars began using the term *renaissance* to describe the artistic and architectural style employed in northern Italy from between about 1450 to 1600. In 1860, Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt published his famous two-volume work *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (*The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*), in which the term *renaissance* was applied beyond the confines of artistic style to the broad scope of human endeavors generally, and was juxtaposed with the preceding "Dark Ages" (i.e., the "Middle Ages") as a burst of intellectual and cultural light.

Burkhardt's work exercised a profound influence on contemporary Western self-conceptualization. It has been said that Burckhardt "was the great discoverer of the age of the Renaissance." Indeed, his book has been in print since the nineteenth century and has been so widely read that it is now difficult to conceptualize the history of Western civilization without resort to Burckhardt's concepts and historical framework concerning an "Italian Renaissance." A growing number of historians, however, note that Burckhardt may have *invented* the Renaissance rather than having *discovered* it. Contemporary historians, in particular, often disagree with Burckhardt over the issue of whether or not the Renaissance was a *sharp break* with the civilization of the High Middle Ages or whether it was a *continuation* of the civilization of the High Middle Ages. We will discuss the Renaissance as both a *continuation* and a *restructuring* of the civilization of the High Middle Ages (see chapter 5) that forms a transitional bridge with the modern era.

Description of the Renaissance

The Renaissance (or the Late Middle Ages, as it is also known among historians), this narrative asserts, formed a bridge between the High Middle Ages and early modern Europe. The Renaissance was primarily an urban movement that was restricted to the upper levels of that same urban society. It manifested itself first as a transformation in economic and social conditions that prompted, or perhaps even produced, an accompanying artistic and cultural movement. This transformation has been described as embodying several of what eventually became "modern" Western attitudes:

Individualism

The state and society exist to promote the potential of the individual— artistically, intellectually, spiritually, and materially. The ideal human, what today would be called the "Renaissance man," was then referred to as "*l'uomo universal*," or the "universal man." The "universal man" was intellectually, professionally, and culturally adept. Commenting in 1450, Michele Savanarola declared that such a "distinguished man came close upon the hero," and that although they "were no saints … [they] deserve to be added to the [list of] Saints" (Burckhardt, 88). Burckhardt noted that, "The fifteenth century is, above all, that of the *many-sided men*. There is no biography which does not, besides the chief work of its hero, speak of other pursuits all passing beyond the limits of dilettantism [or "amateurism"]" (82).

Classicism

The ideal man (males only, alas, in that day and age) was adept in both ancient Latin and in ancient Greek, was widely read in classic literature, and was knowledgeable concerning the history of Rome and Athens. They were, in a word, classicists. Burkhardt noted that: "The Florentine merchant and statesman was often learned in both the classical languages; the most famous humanists read the Ethics and Politics of Aristotle to him and his sons; even the daughters of the house were highly educated. It is in these circles that private education was first treated seriously" (82). The Florentines not only encouraged private education, but founded the Platonic Academy of Florence, a forum for discussion and education financially and intellectually sponsored by Cosimo de Medici (a member of the most wealthy family in the Western world, the de Medici family).

It was at this point that some of the efforts undertaken in the Carolingian Renaissance of the ninth century paid off: under Medici patronage, hundreds of classical texts, hitherto "lost" (i.e., previously unknown to people of that time) were recovered from the monasteries of northern Europe, where they had been painstakingly copied during the Carolingian Renaissance and preserved for hundreds of years. The works of many classical authors, including Cicero, were subsequently collected and copied in Florence and became part of the increasing number of private libraries in northern Italy, providing a canon of texts that all participants in the Renaissance referenced. The establishment of a textual canon by classical authors—in addition to the Bible and the works of Christian authors—marked an important point in the development of a secular outlook.

Humanism

Beginning with the study of ancient history and languages, participants in the emerging Renaissance culture of Italy increasingly sought to define human individuality and existence in rational terms, although rational explanations were also often made *in addition to or in connection with* existing religious justifications and teachings. For example, the Florentine philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) authored the *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, sometimes called the "Manifesto of the Renaissance" or the key restatement of Italian humanism. Mirandola saw humans as part of a great chain of being, in which all things were classified according to the quantity of spirit *and* of matter they possessed. His rational classifications and explanations were combined with existing religious teachings regarding angels and other heavenly beings. Metal, stone, and other inanimate objects—composed of matter without spirit—occupied the lowest end of the chain. Proceeding up the chain, one first encountered plants, then lower animals with little or no locomotion, then higher animals, then humans (who not only moved but could exercise reason and choice), then angels and other heavenly beings, and then finally God at the pinnacle. There were hierarchies within each group, but it was possible to move things from one portion of a group to another, just as it was believed that the alchemist could transmute common lead into the much nobler gold. However, humans alone could move upward in the great chain of being, through the exercise of reason and choice. To act without reason was to become like a beast, and to act in accordance with reason was to become more godlike. It was, for some humanist thinkers, also possible for humans to move inappropriately beyond the natural boundaries of reason: Christopher Marlowe's (1564–1593)

dramatic character Dr. Faustus (Faust) lost his soul by moving beyond the limitations of reason, acting more like a limitless god than a limited human being.

Secularism

Although the Italian Renaissance is credited with the development of secularism (the concept that government and religion ought to be kept apart), it would be premature to think of the men of this age as secularists in the contemporary sense. The Renaissance thinkers of Italy increasingly judged their quality of life and implemented the values of Ancient Rome and Greece *in connection with* or as a *substitute* for the values of Christendom. Some Renaissance thinkers were anticlerical, blaming the clergy for promoting superstition, yet posited human existence within a religious conception of being, with God at the pinnacle. To be secular in fifteenth-century Italy might have meant antipathy toward organized religion, but that did not necessarily mean antipathy toward God.

Geography and Phases of the Renaissance

Historians often speak of the Renaissance in two phases: a Southern (Italian) Renaissance and a Northern Renaissance. The use of these phases blurs or hides some commonalities, but also allows historians to discuss the era in terms of important divergences. The classification therefore has some measure of utility in our narrative, so long as its limitations are recognized. As stated previously, the Renaissance can be seen both as a *continuation* of the High Middle Ages and as a *restructuring* of that prior age.

The Southern or Italian Renaissance (1300–1600)

Beginning in the 1300s, the city-states of northern Italy, especially Florence, experienced a growth in prosperity due to increased trade and the development of the essential concepts of modern banking—continuations of the economic trends of the High Middle Ages discussed in chapter 5. These northern city-states achieved a tenuous independence from the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire and the kings of France on the one hand, and the papacy on the other. Ruled by local aristocrats, these small political entities sought to enhance their status—indeed competed with each other—by patronizing the best in the arts and in learning, thus creating a climate in which artists and intellectuals prospered. The rest of Europe looked more and more to northern Italy for leadership in science, art, and engineering, and often sent their sons there to study. The list of famous persons participating in the Italian Renaissance is long. We have space here for only a few of the most prominent examples of the intellectual and artistic leaders of northern Italy. The reader should note that the following list includes persons living in the High Middle Ages, stressing the Renaissance as a continuation of previous times rather than a sharp break.

Dante Alighieri 1265–1321

Dante Alighieri (see chapter 5) led the way in the cultivation of early Italian vernacular literature. He is considered the embodiment of both the ideal Medieval man and the Renaissance man—again, emphasizing continuity. His most influential work, *The Divine Comedy* as it is

known in English, was composed between 1314 and 1321. It tells the story of a personal journey through hell (Italian, *Inferno*), Purgatory (*Purgatorio*), and heaven (*Paradiso*). In it, he himself symbolizes the heroic individual—both as the poet who writes about his own journey and as the pilgrim sent by God through the realms of the afterlife. Dante is unashamed in declaring that he is as great a poet as Homer or Virgil. He successfully makes his way through the regions of damnation, and then repentance, into the presence of God, surviving to tell the tale for the reader's benefit. All three realms are populated by classical and historical figures, demonstrating Dante's mastery of classical history and literature as it was known in his day. He also populated the poem with a few of his contemporaries—some in heaven and some in hell. He spares no one by virtue of office or power: popes are as likely to be found in hell as in heaven, as are political leaders. The story is considered a "comedy" in the sense that Dante (both the subject of his poem *and* its hero) successfully emerges from hell and enters heaven. Individualism, classicism, humanism, and secularism are embedded in nearly every point of the poem. In this sense, Dante personifies the ideal Renaissance man. Nevertheless, Dante looks to the afterlife as being perhaps more important than this life, and repeatedly reminds the reader to live now so as to prosper then. In this sense, he is also the ideal Medieval Man. *The Divine Comedy* illustrates, perhaps better than any other single work, how the Renaissance was a continuation and extension of the transformative changes of the High Middle Ages, rather than a new and brilliant awakening.

Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374)

Like Dante, Petrarch (as he is called in English) personified the continuity of the civilization of the High Middle Ages and its restructured extension into the Renaissance. He is called the "Father of Humanism," was a renowned classicist, and—together with Dante—laid the foundation for the formation of modern Italian through writing vernacular poetry. In 1336 he climbed Mount Ventoux (6,273 feet), located near Avignon in southern France. He took along a copy of the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. At the summit, he opened the *Confessions*, and the book fell open—or so the account goes—upon a page that said:

> And men go about to wonder at the heights of the mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide sweep of rivers, and the circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars, but *themselves they consider not* (Powers, 404-405).

Petrarch took the passage both personally and allegorically: climbing Mount Ventoux was a metaphor of the climb that the superior man must make toward a better life. The allegory stuck, and later in life he composed the *secretum* ("my secret book"), in which his life is examined thoroughly by St. Augustine in front of Veritas (Lady Truth). Augustine informs Petrarch that Petrarch's love of temporal things is the source of his unhappiness. The book is seen as an attempt by Petrarch to reconcile his admiration of the classical world with his Christian faith. Petrarch wrote many other works and was also influential in the rediscovery of the writing of the Roman Senator Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC), whose Latin works were considered a model of perfect language. Petrarch took variant readings of Cicero and edited a "critical edition," meaning a text that through scholarly editing became the accepted version. This process of creating critical editions of classical texts became an important part of the Renaissance and eventually made the study of history—necessary to the translation of critical editions—a

standard discipline of education. In 1341 Petrarch became the first person to be crowned poet laureate since ancient times, receiving the laurel-wreath crown in Rome itself.

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375)

Giovanni Boccaccio was a contemporary of Petrarch, and the two corresponded regularly following their meeting in Florence in 1350. Between 1349 and 1352—years immediately following the passage of the Black Death through Florence—he wrote the *Decameron*. The *Decameron* involves ten young Florentine men and women who have fled the city in order to escape the Black Death. Each of the ten youths relates a story each day in order to pass the time. Over the course of ten days, one hundred stories are shared. In addition to timely writings such as *The Decameron*, Boccaccio successfully engaged in frequent public debates with clerics over the propriety of studying classical literature—which the contemporary clergy often argued was a source of moral harm—thereby advancing the study of classical works. In 1360 Boccaccio completed the *Geneologia Deorum Gentilium*, basically a handbook guiding readers through the complex and often confusing mythology of classical gods and goddesses. The handbook was regarded as a required resource for those persons intent upon studying classical literature (meaning everyone aspiring to join the ranks of the Renaissance men). Boccaccio also advanced the field of literary criticism with the invention of the *Lectura Dantis*, consisting of public readings from *The Divine Comedy* together with the critical interpretation of a single *canto*. The practice continues to this day, not only in Italy but in the United States as well (e.g., the Dante Club founded by Henry Wordsworth Longfellow in Boston in 1864, and the recent publication of the *Lectura Dantis Californensis*).

Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457)

Born the son of a Roman lawyer, Valla perfected his mastery of classical Latin at an early age and later published two famous works in Latin. In the first, *De Voluptate* (1431), he rejected the philosophy of Zeno and other Stoics in favor of Epicurus and proclaimed his support for those persons who claimed a right to indulge in "man's natural appetites." The second, *De Elegantiis Latinae Linguae* (1444), encouraged Italians to reform contemporary Latin usage to conform with classical models, particularly Cicero. Perhaps his most lasting contribution was *De Falso Credita et Ementita Constantini Donatione Declamation*, completed in 1440, which proved the Donation of Constantine (see chapter 4) a fraud. This revelation discredited the papacy, which had relied upon the document for centuries to assert its authority over secular rulers, and this almost on the eve of the Protestant Reformation.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)

Leonardo da Vinci typified the Renaissance man perhaps more than any other individual. He was a genuine polymath—a person who mastered many disciplines. As an artist, his famous *Vitruvian Man* attempts to solve a traditional problem of proportion by reconciling the human form to both a circle (a symbol of eternity or of the heavenly) with a square (a symbol for the temporal and earthly), and is a universal icon of the Renaissance. Leonardo da Vinci also drew—or painted—hundreds of works, including the famous *Mona Lisa* (painted between 1513 and 1519) and the *Last Supper* (painted between 1495 and 1498). Under the patronage of the Sforza

family in Milan, he produced several conceptual works on engineering and invention, including flying machines (birdlike devices and a helicopter-like machine), a mechanical calculator, a double-hulled ship, and even a tank. He advanced the study of human anatomy considerably, drawing various parts of the human body using dissection—including one of the first drawings of a fetus in utero. It may have been his bold attitude, even more than his output, that made him an icon of the Italian Renaissance: he was convinced that through the exercise of reason, nearly any material challenge could be resolved. He freely pursued his very active curiosity and gave expression to his immense imagination, qualities highly valued in modern scientists and academics.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527)

Yet another Florentine, Machiavelli is considered a founding figure in the modern discipline of political science, particularly in the area of political ethics. His most influential work, *Il Principe* (*The Prince*, circulated as early as 1513, printed posthumously in 1532) contrasts a traditional (i.e., hereditary) prince with the "new prince." The old hereditary prince inherits sociopolitical institutions that he must *maintain*, but the new prince must build his power from scratch, a more difficult task. Machiavelli argued that private morality and public morality were different spheres of concern, and that the successful new prince should recognize the difference and act accordingly. The new prince must not only be willing to act without regard for reputation, but must consider acting publicly in immoral and unjust ways to gain and maintain power above all else, employing deceit and naked force when necessary. Although Machiavelli did not coin the phrase "the ends justify the means," it has been taken as illustrative of his arguments and recommended methods. Later readers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, avoided taking the work seriously, arguing that the book was a political satire, perhaps aimed at his political enemies (the de Medici family, in particular), mocking their rule rather than advocating it. The adjective *Machiavellian* entered the English vocabulary, indicating the enduring influence of the book.

Michelangelo (1475–1564)

Unlike many artists of his day, Michelangelo was not only widely famous during his lifetime, but actually wealthy as a result of producing art (he was the first Westerner to have a biography of his life published while he was living). More than even Leonardo da Vinci, his art influenced all subsequent artists in the Western tradition and beyond. In 1499, at the age of twenty-four, he sculpted his most famous *pietà*, a statue of the Virgin Mary holding the body of Christ after his removal from the cross. The sculpture was influenced, in part, by canto 33 of Dante's *Paradiso*, which Michelangelo read frequently. In 1501, he completed the statue of David now housed in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence. Biblical David—not yet a king but a determined young shepherd—holds a stone and looks over his left shoulder, contemplating how to kill the giant Goliath. By sculpting David nude, armed only with a stone, Michelangelo universalized the heroic figure of a commoner determined to bring down a tyrant, allowing the statue to represent a mismatched, yet just, conflict in nearly any age and in nearly any place.
In 1505 he was called to Rome by Pope Julius II (1443–1513) and given a commission to sculpt the pope's tomb. Although he worked on the tomb off and on for forty years, his most important work during this time was painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The ceiling depicts biblical

events from the creation of the universe, through the first human habitation in the Garden of Eden, to the fall and expulsion of Adam and Eve, culminating in the drunkenness of Noah—depicting the power of God and both the greatness and the depravity of humankind. A central panel, perhaps the most famous, depicts Adam and God reaching toward each other and nearly touching, indicating that, like Mirandola, Michelangelo saw humankind as potentially nigh unto God, or as the psalmist says, only a "little lower than the angels." The ceiling may be the most influential work of Western art ever created. Michelangelo bridged Renaissance and Baroque artistic periods, designing the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in about 1564, although the famous dome—the tallest in the world at over 448 feet—was not completed during his lifetime.

The Southern Renaissance consequently gave impetus to several notable modern academic disciplines, including history, political science, and literary criticism. Its conceptualization of individualism, humanism, and secularism define modern Western self-identity.

The Northern Renaissance (ca. 1450–1600)

One of the criticisms leveled against Burckhardt's conceptualization of the Renaissance is that he treated it as essentially—if not exclusively—an *Italian* phenomenon. Contemporary historians, in contrast to Burckhardt, speak of a movement of Renaissance culture and values northward, "across the Alps." Although the northern version shared commonalities with the Italian Renaissance, there were differences as well, primarily differences of focus and subject. Humanists of the Northern Renaissance were more concerned with reforming the church, and much of northern humanist effort was directed to this end. Humanists such as the Englishman Thomas More (1478–1535) and the Dutch reformer Desiderius Erasmus (1486–1536) lived into the period of the Protestant Reformation but remained devout Catholics. They urged reform rather than schism.

Sir Thomas More (1478–1535)

British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper called More "the first great Englishman whom we feel that we know, the most saintly of humanists, the most human of saints, the universal man of our cool northern renaissance" (O'Connell, 16). More, the son of a prominent London lawyer, studied in London and at Oxford. He eventually rose to political power, serving from 1529 to 1532 as lord chancellor to King Henry VIII (r. 1509–1547). When Henry abandoned the Catholic Church over the issue of divorce—by means of the Act of Supremacy of 1534—More refused to endorse the maneuver. Henry subsequently beheaded More for treason. During the years prior to his execution, More, like many northern humanists, took advantage of the comparatively recent invention of the printing press (invented by Johannes Gutenberg, perfected sometime between 1439 and 1460). In 1516, about a year before Martin Luther nailed his famous ninety-five theses to a church door in Wittenberg, More published his most famous work, *Utopia*. The book is a fictional story—the name "utopia" is Greek for "no-place"—about a mythical island and its people. In contrast to the emerging nations and societies of Western Europe, "utopian" society practiced communal ownership of land, abolished private property, provided an education to both men and women, and tolerated religious differences (but not atheism). By thus casting the story in allegorical terms, More was able to present and discuss current concerns without incurring the wrath of a particular ruler or pope. The work, however, sharply contrasted with his

religious conservatism and sustained attacks on Protestantism, indicating that it may have been an attempt to reconcile his humanist leanings with his Roman Catholic faith.

After 1520, More became increasingly involved in responding to the writings of Martin Luther and William Tyndale. In 1521 Henry VIII "wrote" a defense of the Catholic faith aimed against Luther (called the *Assertio*), with More's editorial help. For his efforts, Henry received the title "Defender of the Faith" from the pope (which would later prove premature). Luther responded to Henry in much-less–than-civil terms, provoking More to his own uncivil response, made under a pseudonym. When William Tyndale thereafter came to Luther's defense, More also responded to him in 1531 with the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, a work of nearly half a million words. Henry's later politically motivated severance from the Catholic Church provoked a crisis of conscience in More, who elected to stand by his faith rather than by his monarch, resulting in his execution.

Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536)

Erasmus of Rotterdam—as he is also known—was a personal friend of Thomas More. Using techniques pioneered by Italian humanists, Erasmus prepared a critical edition of the New Testament in Greek (essential to the subsequent translation work of William Tyndale). In 1516 Erasmus printed a new Latin translation and his Greek New Testament in a single volume, the *Novum Instrumentum Omne*. Martin Luther used this edition to prepare his own German translation of the Bible. Erasmus, like More, was an advocate of religious toleration—although a strong opponent of the Protestant Reformation. While he respected Luther, he disagreed with the famous reformer in his book *De Libero Arbitrio* (1524, *On Free Will*), but in more civil fashion than More had. Like More, however, he used satire to discuss political and religious abuses. His most famous work, *In Praise of Folly* (1511), was written in the course of a single week while he was traveling with Thomas More. In fact, the Latin title, *Moriae Encomium,* is a pun: *Moriae* can be read as both "Customs" and "More" (as in Thomas "More"), so that the title also means "In Praise of Thomas More." In the book, the protagonist, named Folly, calls herself a goddess—the child of Plutus (god of wealth) and a nymph named Freshness (i.e., inexperience). Two nymphs—named Inebriation and Ignorance—nurse Folly to adulthood. Several anti-virtues and gods accompany Folly on her journeys: self-love, flattery, madness, oblivion, laziness, pleasure, intemperance, and deep sleep. The book was widely read and translated into several languages, but largely failed to achieve its core aim of remedying political and ecclesiastical abuse: Pope Leo X, whom Luther accused of abusing indulgences and who later excommunicated Luther, merely thought the book was funny.

The Arts of the Northern Renaissance

Although the Italians dominated art and literature during the Renaissance, the North produced its share of notables, including English poet and playwright William Shakespeare and the German artist Albrecht Dürer.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Widely considered England's finest author and by some the world's greatest playwright as well, Shakespeare authored—or collaborated in authoring—thirty-eight plays, 154 sonnets,

and other narratives and epitaphs. His works have been translated, in whole or in part, into virtually every modern language. His plays have been performed more than those of any other playwright, and in several ways have come to define and shape modern theater and movies. Shakespeare's dramatic work may be divided into three major categories: comedies, histories, and tragedies. He excelled in all three forms, and in fact created the dramatic genre of histories. In 1599 he secured the construction of the outdoor Globe Theater, and in 1608 took over the operation of the indoor Blackfriars Theater.

Shakespeare's effect upon the development of the modern English language was profound. In fact, the English language is filled with his sayings, to the point where less-informed modern attendees have remarked, "What's so great about Shakespeare? It's nothing but clichés." Examples of his linguistic heritage include: "One fell swoop," "Neither a borrower nor a lender be," "For my own part, it was Greek to me," "A dish fit for the gods," "in the twinkling of an eye," "All that glitters is not gold," "We are such stuff as dreams are made on," "O, brave new world, that hath such people in't," "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!" and "Off with his head!" Shakespeare addressed many of the most pressing social, theological, and philosophical problems in Western civilization and became, for the Western reader, a source of provocative introspection and deep emotion. Modern poet T. S. Eliot once remarked, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the world between them. There is no third." The constant output of Shakespeare-based movies from Hollywood attests the bard's continued relevance and ongoing inspiration.

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)

Dürer exhibited the classicist tendencies associated with the Southern Renaissance in his incorporation of classical mythology into the themes of his art. His numerous self-portraits marked him as a strong individualist. The pathos associated with his religious art—such as *Adam and Eve* (1507)—indicates his humanist sympathies. Dürer's pioneering work in woodcuts demonstrated the potential of that medium as high art, while his watercolors are perhaps the earliest example of modern landscape painting. In the fashion of a Renaissance polymath, Dürer wrote important works on geometry and human proportion that influenced later artists. In particular, his *Vier Bücher von Menschlicher Proportion* (1512–1528, *Four Books on Human Proportion*) gave mathematical precision to the depiction of the human form. Dürer showed how to create five different depictions of males and females, using precise mathematical measurement derived from the direct observation of "two to three hundred" individuals. He also authored an essay on aesthetics focused on ideal beauty. Rejecting the concept of objective beauty, Dürer adopted a relativist concept of beauty based upon variety and stated that truth could be found in the highly varied beauty of nature. Dürer—although his personal religious leanings, if any, remain largely unknown—once remarked that he wished to produce a portrait of Martin Luther, to "create a lasting memorial of the Christian man who helped me overcome so many difficulties" (Price, 225).

Reformation

Between 1517 and 1648, the Christian world split deeply along sectarian lines. The popular mind often views the Protestant Reformation as a sudden, single event begun by a single person (Martin Luther, 1483–1546), rather than the culmination of informal and formal reform

movements that had been gaining momentum in parts of the Christian world for centuries. By the time Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the church door in Wittenberg in 1517, the Reformation had been informally underway for some time; what it lacked prior to Luther was a strong leader and a clear message. In order to succeed, Luther required state support, funding, and protection largely unavailable in earlier times. Finally, Luther had to get his message out and attract as broad an audience as possible, and the printing press met this need quite well. The long preexisting desire for reform was joined now to the right person, in the right place (the Holy Roman Empire), at the right time, armed with the right tools.

Precursors to Martin Luther

Before turning to Luther and his work, a review of earlier ecclesiastical criticisms and calls for reform is in order.

Dante

We begin with *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, which was widely read across Western Europe by an increasingly literate audience. As mentioned earlier, popes and priests were as likely to be found in hell as in heaven in the *Comedy*, indicating that Dante engaged in criticism, and desired reform, nearly two centuries before Luther. For example, Pope Boniface VIII, Dante's personal enemy and the first pope subjected to the French monarchy through the Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy (see chapter 5), is destined to join the damned souls in the eighth circle of hell, where priests who sold church office for money (called Simoniacs, after Simon Magus mentioned in the New Testament) are thrust into burning holes for eternity. But Dante's most stinging rebuke, written sometime around 1321, is not allegorical, but direct. In heaven, St. Peter himself delivers a damning rebuke to the papacy of Boniface VIII. Peter speaks to Dante in heaven:

He who on earth usurps my place,
my place, my place, which in the eyes
of God's own Son is vacant,

Has made my tomb a sewer of blood and filth,
So that the Evil One, who fell from here above,
Takes satisfaction there below.

The Bride of Christ was not nurtured with my blood,
nor that of Linus and of Cletus,
To serve the cause of gaining gold.

Rather to gain this joyous way of life
[Popes] Sixtus, Pius, Calixtus, and Urban
Shed their blood after many tears.

It was never our intention that the one part
of Christ's fold should be seated on the right
of our successors, and the other on the left,

nor that the keys entrusted to my keeping
should become devices on the standards
borne in battles waged against the baptized,

nor that I become the imprint in a seal
on sale for fraudulence and bribes
so that I blush, in turn, with rage and shame.

Ravenous wolves in shepherds' clothing
can be seen, from here above, in every pasture.
O God our defender, why do you not act?

In summary, Dante accuses Pope Boniface VIII of murder, vice, selling office, accepting bribes, amassing wealth, dividing Christians one against another, leading armies into battle against other Christians with the symbol of Peter (two crossed keys tied by a ribbon) on the battle flags, and of allowing corrupt priests (ravenous wolves) to exist throughout the church.

John Wycliffe and the Lollards

John Wycliffe (1320–1384) taught theology at Oxford University and was there influenced by such scholars as Roger Bacon and William of Ockham (see chapter 5). Wycliffe believed in an "invisible" true Church of the Elect, meaning persons whom God had predestined to salvation. This true and invisible church was not necessarily composed of the same people as the "visible" Roman Catholic Church. Wycliffe also brought charges of corruption against the clergy and sought to resolve theological dispute by recourse to the Bible, rather than by reference to papal decree. To this end, he began translating the Bible into Middle English (the English of Chaucer's time). Between 1382 and 1395, various portions of this Middle English Bible were translated and (in some cases posthumously) released to the public. Wycliffe, in life and after death, attracted a popular following.

He and his followers (derisively called "Lollards") were given temporary political shelter by the nobleman John of Ghent (1340–1394), but following a peasant revolt in 1381 in which some Lollards were implicated, the members of the movement were driven underground. The Lollards drew up a document, called the *Twelve Concessions of the Lollards*, and copies were nailed to various church doors throughout England, including Westminster Abbey in London. The *Twelve Concessions* called for reforms such as a return to celibacy by the clergy, denouncement of the doctrine of transubstantiation, the end of pilgrimages, and of the veneration of saints. The movement failed to achieve the reforms sought. The Council of Constance posthumously convicted Wycliffe of heresy. Subsequently, his remains were exhumed and burned in 1415, and his ashes were poured into the river Swift.

Jan Hus and the Hussites

In central Europe, Jan Hus (1369–1415), a Czech reformer residing in Prague, drew up four articles, including a claim to the right to preach scripture. In 1410 Hus appealed to Pope Alexander V to allow him possession of Wycliffe's translations of portions of the Bible. Hus and his followers were eventually excommunicated. The government in Bohemia (where Prague was located) initially took Hus's side, and he continued to preach, attacking indulgences—the practice of releasing a person from earthly punishment for sin in exchange for money. Conflict over religion in Prague intensified, however, and in 1415 Hus voluntarily departed for Constance, where the council tried and convicted him of heresy. He was burned at the stake, and his ashes were thrown into the Rhine River. Hus's execution, instead of quelling revolt in Prague, intensified it. His followers, known as Hussites, began a series of wars in the quest for religious autonomy. The wars lasted from 1419 to 1431. The conflict was so well-known outside Bohemia that Joan of Arc threatened to join in a crusade against the Hussites, but was prevented from doing so by her own arrest.

Brethren of the Common Life

In addition to reform movements led by Wycliffe, Hus, and others, groups of devout laypersons formed voluntary organizations that resembled monasteries in some respects. The Brethren of the Common Life was one such group. Located in Holland, they voluntarily abandoned wealth and private property. Their daily activities included listening to sermons,

praying, meditating, and working. Similar devotional communities developed elsewhere in Europe in the fifteenth century, indicating widespread disaffection with traditional religious culture and a quest for a refined spiritual life outside the forms and institutions of monasticism and of the church. Their example inspired Martin Luther, who defended their lifestyle in 1532.

In summary, a serious call for reform, the translation of scripture, and the establishment of reform movements preceded the life and work of Martin Luther and other reformers of the sixteenth century. Luther succeeded where others failed for many reasons, particularly through the support his movement received from secular "German" rulers within the Holy Roman Empire, seeking independence from Rome.

Martin Luther

Luther (1483–1546) was a serious and dedicated monk who was concerned about the clerical and papal abuses and corruption he witnessed firsthand in the Holy Roman Empire. The modern nation of Germany did not exist in Luther's day. Instead, he lived in the Holy Roman Empire, a confederation of a handful of medium-size states and several dozen smaller principalities that collectively occupied most of the territory now within modern Germany. Following the Treaty of Verdun (see chapter 4), Charlemagne's German empire was briefly united under a series of competent rulers, known as the Ottonian dynasty (919–1024). The region subsequently divided—and subdivided—until by Luther's time there was an abundance of semi-independent rulers, including princes, dukes, bishops, and archbishops. Nine "electors" selected the leader of this confederation, called the Holy Roman emperor. Thus, while England, France, and Spain were centralizing and nationalizing, Germany was continuing to fragment. Consequently, German leadership was (comparatively) unable to resist the authority of Rome, and the papacy proved very active in internal political affairs. The Holy Roman Empire was a source of significant revenue for the papacy, both through taxation and through the sale of indulgences. When Luther spoke out against the sale of indulgences and other perceived abuses, he found a ready audience among the lay population—and perhaps more importantly, among many princes and rulers, as well as among many within the clergy itself.

In 1517 he prepared a series of formal statements intended to debate perceived abuses, called the *Ninety-Five Theses*. Posting them to the door of the church in Wittenberg, he intended not only to attack the sale of indulgences, but to attack the concept of papal supremacy itself. He contended that even if the papacy had at one time been appointed by God to manage the church and its morality, it had lost that power due to its corruption. Luther did not stop there, but further claimed that only scripture could determine doctrine and dogma. Additionally, whereas the church taught that Christians, through good works, could earn or merit salvation, Luther, quoting extensively from the New Testament rather than from authoritative statements made in Rome, taught that salvation came by grace alone, and not by works. So long as Luther attracted no significant following, the church mostly ignored him. But by 1520 he had become a household name, so to speak, among the educated and even among the peasantry; Luther successfully tapped into popular discontent aimed at the church and the clergy.

In 1521 both the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (the same emperor who was also known as Charles I, King of Spain, see above) convoked a deliberative council, called a *diet*, in the city of Worms. At this point, Frederick III of Saxony, one of the nine imperial electors, secured safe passage for Luther to and from the diet. Luther appeared at the Diet of Worms and was declared an outlaw by the emperor in the Edict of Worms. Luther was thereafter

excommunicated, and the battle over the future of Christianity was engaged. The edict provided that "For this reason we forbid anyone from this time forward … to receive, defend, sustain, or favour the said Martin Luther.… Those who will help in his capture will be rewarded generously for their good work." Charles was, however, so preoccupied elsewhere in Spain and the Netherlands that he was unable to enforce the edict. Frederick III staged a fake attack on Luther to distract those hunting him and gave him safe conduct to the fortress at Wartburg, where Fredrick continued to protect him. This protection, coupled with popular discontent, provided an environment in which Luther's reforms could take hold.

In Wartburg, Luther translated the Bible into German, and by judicious use of the printing press, published numerous pamphlets and tracts that spread his message throughout the Holy Roman Empire and beyond. Subsequently, the princes and rulers of the area began choosing sides. Those seeking to weaken the influence of Rome in their realms supported Luther, while others remained Catholic. Hundreds of Lutheran congregations emerged in the 1520s, each declaring itself independent of the papacy. The crisis of papal authority was in full swing.

John Calvin

It was John Calvin (1509–1564) who arguably transformed Luther's primarily "German" reformation into an international religious movement and rebellion against Rome. Whereas Luther saw himself somewhat in the light of a German reformer, Calvin would not be bound to local sympathies. From his headquarters in Geneva, he established congregations and disseminated Protestant ideas throughout Europe and beyond, setting the core agenda of Protestant development for the next two centuries. Trained as a lawyer, Calvin expounded Protestant doctrines in the famous work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) with the precision of one trained in law. Calvin's most famous teaching was the predestination of souls. According to this teaching, God predetermined the eternal destination of each soul: either heaven or hell. Nevertheless, each soul was free to make its own choices, although God knew whether a soul would ultimately choose good or choose evil. Needless to say, the doctrine has proven notoriously difficult to understand and was a source of additional sectarian splits within Christianity. Calvin, in fact, believed that the original sin of Adam had so taken root among the souls of humanity that the majority of humans were destined to eternal hellfire. In spite of the perceived harshness of this teaching, Calvinist congregations appeared in Germany, the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and France.

Priesthood and Ecclesiastical Authority

Although Luther and Calvin had sundered the traditional and uniform authority of Rome, producing a divided and sectarian Christianity, they struggled to provide a universally acceptable substitute for papal authority. The Roman Catholic claim was straightforward: Christ, according to the New Testament, gave to Peter, his disciple, all power to bind on heaven and on earth (Matthew 16:17 NIV). Peter traveled to Rome and was executed there. Tradition held that Peter consecrated the bishop of Rome as his priesthood heir, the head of Christendom and successor to the chief apostle of Christ. Luther addressed the issue of priesthood authority by suggesting that

the entire assembly of believing Christians (i.e., Protestants) constituted what was called "the priesthood of all believers," meaning that no one individual has ultimate authority from God, but that such authority is spread throughout the community of the faithful. Each congregation had power to elect its own presbyters and elders, who served as a substitute for clergy and represented the congregation in regional or national assemblies.

Other Protestant Faiths

Other prominent Protestant sects include the Anglicans (Church of England) and the Anabaptists. Following the Act of Supremacy (1534), the rulers of England—kings and queens alike—became the head of the Anglican Church. Some later English rulers, like Queen Mary I (1516–1558), sought a return to Roman Catholicism. Another Protestant sect, the Anabaptists, believed in adult baptism and practiced forms of communal living and common property. Originating in Switzerland, Anabaptist beliefs spread until (sometimes brutally and violently) suppressed by other Christians. The movement was forced underground, but endured, principally in the Americas as Amish and Mennonite communities. Finally, Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) established another sect in Switzerland. Although similar to Lutheranism, Zwingli's beliefs eventually came into conflict with those of his Protestant neighbors and of Swiss Roman Catholics. During an armed battle in 1531, Zwingli was killed.

By the 1530s, force and violence were increasingly used to settle what were—outwardly at least—religious disagreements, indicating that the underlying conflict was as much political as it was doctrinal. In particular, these conflicts provided an opportunity for political realignment and the settlement of long-standing local disputes, many of them undeniably socioeconomic in nature and which arguably had nothing to do with matters of faith.

Counter-Reformation (1536–1648)

The papacy responded to the growth of Protestantism and began a counter-process of reform from within the church beginning in 1545, known as the Counter-Reformation. Milestones in the Counter-Reformation included the Council of Trent, the Spanish monastic reforms of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, and the founding of the Jesuit Order.

Council of Trent (1545–1563)

Pope Paul III (r. 1534–1549) convened a council of cardinals in the city of Trent with the commission to reform certain aspects of the church. Paul III was himself a convert to Catholicism and was appointed in an effort to distance the papacy from its monarchical past during the High Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The reform agenda addressed corruption among the clergy, the sale of indulgences, and other claims of financial abuse. The council, which met in committees over the course of almost two decades:

- confirmed the apostolic priesthood authority of the church;
- reaffirmed the seven sacraments of the church, specifically reaffirming transubstantiation;
- declared that salvation was justified through the atoning mediation of Christ, according to the faith *and* works of each individual (the doctrine of justification by faith and works);

- addressed the need to educate the clergy (especially priests) and lay ministers (principally deacons) through the establishment of seminaries;
- declared that the Church alone had authority to interpret and pronounce upon scripture; and
- made the Latin Vulgate the exclusive authoritative scripture of the church.

The Council of Trent also made declarations as to religious art, the veneration of saints, and music. Nudity in religious art had come under severe criticism, and portions of Michelangelo's altarpiece in the Sistine Chapel (entitled *The Last Judgment*) were painted over to hide any nudity, although the original artwork has since been restored. The council clarified that religious iconography was to be used only to focus a person's attention upon the saint being petitioned, and not act as an idolatrous object of worship in itself.

Finally, the use of polyphonic music (multiple melodies rather than the unison of plainchant) was allowed in the Mass and other services. Giovanni Palestrina (1525–1594) is credited with saving polyphony, which was perhaps the salient feature of Renaissance music. Polyphony involves the interweaving of seemingly independent melodies to evoke a harmonic structure through counterpoint, rather than by means of chords alone. Although Palestrina's story may be apocryphal, it is still worth the telling until such time as it is conclusively proven false. The third session of the Council of Trent (1562–1563) was concerned about the kind of music used in connection with the Mass, meaning it was concerned about the growing use of polyphony (which had increased since its first use in the High Middle Ages). Polyphony was, more and more, replacing Gregorian chant in church services. The council expressed two concerns. First, popular songs and lyrics were making their way into the liturgy (and were subsequently banned). Second, the cardinals were concerned that polyphony obscured the text of the Mass, interrupting the listener's devotion. Polyphony, however, was not banned. Legend holds that Palestrina performed his polyphonic *Missa Papae Marcelli* (Pope Marcellus Mass) for the council. The words could be heard clearly, and the music was so beautiful that the council voted to allow polyphony in the Mass.

Palestrina was not, of course, the only great composer of polyphonic religious music. Other—some equally famous—composers in this general period of time included the Flemish masters Josquin des Prez (1455–1521) and Orlando di Lasso (1532–1594), the Spaniard Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611), and English composers Thomas Tallis (1505–1585) and William Byrd (1540–1623). These composers successfully used polyphony in both secular and religious works. Their work, especially the innovative operatic compositions of Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643), provided the basis for what arguably became the first universal European musical style, the Baroque (see chapter 7). This would probably not have been possible without the continued use of polyphony in religious music, made possible by the Council of Trent.

New and Reformed Religious Orders

Monastic internal reform movements emerged as well. Notable among them were efforts to reform the Carmelite Order in Spain.

St. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

St. Teresa emphasized a return to a simpler life for Carmelite nuns, consisting of increased withdrawal from the world and its concerns, increased meditation, the cultivation of a personal spiritual association with Christ, and spiritual exercises intended to draw the soul into union with God. Her book *El castillo interior* (1577, *The Interior Castle*) was widely used as a guide for individual spiritual development. In it she discussed seven "mansions of the soul," with the last mansion in the soul's castle consisting of eternal union with God. Teresa herself sought—and taught others to seek—what she called the devotion of ecstasy and rapture, a state in which the soul was absorbed into God's love and was not conscious of the body or its demands.

St. John of the Cross (1542–1591)

Teresa's male counterpart, St. John of the Cross, supported her reforms. His teachings and reforms became so influential that he was kidnapped in 1577 by monks who opposed reform. He was imprisoned for the next nine months in a cell hardly large enough for his body (six by nine feet), never allowed to change clothes, fed penitential bread and water with occasional scraps of salt fish, and publicly flogged weekly. He managed to escape in a story worthy of author Alexander Dumas: he pried the iron door of his cell from off its hinges and escaped through a small window in an adjoining cell. Afterward, he was brought back to health only gradually. His experiences culminated in the book *The Dark Night of the Soul* (1578–79), in which he encouraged believers to endure the sufferings of darkness in order to claim and experience the love of God.

Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)

Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) was a Spanish knight of Basque descent. In 1521, while serving in battle, he was severely wounded in the legs by a cannonball. While convalescing he read works on the life of Christ and the Gospels, experiencing a deep conversion. He later wrote the book *Spiritual Exercises* (1548), which intended to impart understanding of how one might fully cultivate a relationship with God while living in the world. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was founded at his request in the same year, and he became its first spiritual director. The Jesuits served as missionaries for the pope, answering directly to Rome. Known in more recent times as the pope's "Counter-Reformation Shock Troops," they were effectively used to interdict and counteract the Reformation, winning much of Europe back to Catholicism. They are also called "God's Marines," due to their willingness to serve anywhere they were called to, even under the harshest of conditions. Jesuits also worked as missionaries among native populations around the world, spreading Catholicism to every habitable continent. They were also known for establishing schools and universities. In the United States, Jesuit institutions of education include Georgetown University, Boston College, Fordham University, Marquette University, and any university containing the names Loyola or Xavier.

Wars of Religion

Intermittent armed conflict between Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists led eventually to the Peace (or "Treaty") of Augsburg in 1555. The treaty parceled the lands of Germany between Catholics and Lutherans, but made no provision for other Protestants, including Calvinists.

England had become Protestant by the will of the crown and the power of the state, and experienced its own civil and religious conflicts as a result. Scandinavia was largely Protestant and remained so without prolonged conflict. Spain and Italy remained firmly Catholic and resisted Protestantism almost entirely. Two significant areas, France and the Spanish Netherlands, had mixed Catholic and Protestant populations. In 1570, religious violence in France threatened to wreck the country. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of August 24, 1572, illustrates the breakdown of civil order and shows that the violence had little to do with religion or religious issues, as the following description exemplifies:

> In an instant the whole city was filled with dead bodies of every sex and age, and indeed amid such confusion and disorder that everyone was allowed to kill whomever he pleased, whether or not that person belonged to the [Protestant] religion, provided that he had something to be taken, or was an enemy. So it came about that many Papists themselves were slain, even several priests.… No one can count the many cruelties that accompanied these murders… (Adler, 319).

Order was only intermittently restored in Paris and throughout France. At length, the assassination of a rival claimant to the throne allowed Prince Henry of Navarre, at that time himself a Protestant, to ascend the throne of France as King Henry IV (r. 1584–1610). In order to become king, however, Henry had to convert to Catholicism and win the support of the French people. He reportedly said of his conversion, "Paris is worth a Mass." In 1598 Henry attempted to instill official religious toleration by issuing the Edict of Nantes, which allowed the million or so Calvinist Huguenots living in France to worship effectively unmolested, to hold office, and to fortify their towns. The peace held for nearly one hundred years.

In the Spanish Netherlands, however, the situation was quite different. Spain, under the leadership of staunchly Catholic King Philip II (r. 1554–1598), took the counter-reformation to his subjects in Flanders (then called the Spanish Netherlands, now the western part of Belgium). The English crown actively aided Protestant rebels in the Spanish Netherlands, not so much to support fellow Protestants, but to keep a rival great power (Spain) away from England's Flemish trading partners. In the 1580s, matters between Spain and England came to a head. In 1588 Philip sent the famed Spanish Armada, consisting of some 131 ships, 18,000 soldiers, and over 2,500 cannons, to invade England. Spain intended to bring England forcibly back to the "true church." Although England was outgunned, a combination of weather and tactical blunders resulted in a Spanish defeat. The defeat eventually proved to be a temporary setback for Spain as a world power, but it gave England political and economic breathing room and allowed for eventual Dutch independence.

Thirty Years' War (1618–1648)

The Thirty Years' War was fought mostly within the confines of the Holy Roman Empire and wrecked the countryside in Germany and France. It may justifiably be called Europe's first continent-wide conflict. Some historians also maintain that it was, *per capita*, Europe's bloodiest conflict to date. The war began in 1618 when rebels in Bohemia sought to make the country Protestant, and continued when the Holy Roman emperor forced re-Catholicization of the region following a victory at the Battle of White Mountain (near Prague) in 1621. Bohemian Protestants did not submit, and allies were found among the Protestant populations of Europe in Germany,

Scandinavia, and elsewhere. The conflict was transformed into a German civil war between the Catholic imperial armies and Lutheran and Calvinist forces on the other side. By the 1640s, the conflict involved France and Spain as supporters of the emperor, and Holland joined the ranks of the Protestant forces.

It would be simple, at this point, to see the war as one over religion and personal conviction, but that was most likely not the case. Within a very short time, the war took on strong political and social aspects. Politically, it was a war to reform the boundaries of what would become Germany—over the course of two centuries—and to weaken the power of the Holy Roman emperor. In social terms, it became a war to settle old scores, to indulge in what were basically ethnic cleansings, and to restructure society. Entire communities simply took matters into their own hands in the absence of firm law and order, eliminating whole sections of their population by such means as defenestration (throwing people alive out of high windows). It was this last aspect, together with the devastating use of gunpowder weapons, which contributed toward making the conflict particularly bloody. Finally, widespread plague, famine, and pestilence finished the work of death and destruction. In the end, the population of regional Germany had decreased by as much as one-third, matching the decrease experienced during the Black Death.

The Peace of Westphalia (1648)

The Thirty Years' War ended in the Peace ("Treaty") of Westphalia in 1648. The "winners" arguably included France and Sweden (which suddenly found itself a world power). The losers included Spain and the Habsburg emperors (now mostly confined to Austria). Spain verged on bankruptcy, and its political fortunes declined steadily. The political situation in the Holy Roman Empire was worse territorially, as several dozen more "micro-realms" were added to the list of "countries" within the confederated empire, divided in most cases firmly along Protestant/Catholic lines. And to add to the disorder, some principalities were scarcely more than a few miles across. The region of Germany did not recover demographically or economically for nearly two centuries. The Peace of Westphalia was Europe's first treaty based upon the concept of participating sovereign states, rather than participating monarchs. "France," rather than "Louis XIV, King of France," for example, was a party to the treaty.

Conclusion

At the end of the High Middle Ages, Christendom seemed on as firm a footing as ever. However, European exploration and the acquisition of territory and wealth enhanced the power of certain monarchs and the rising urban commercial class. The Renaissance offered alternatives to religious authority in the fields of morals and ethics through the exercise of reason. Literacy grew in many areas of Western Europe, especially Italy. Its effects, first seen in Italy, spread across the Alps into Germany, England, and other parts of the West. Dissatisfaction with the church, already evident in the High Middle Ages, intensified, leading to the Protestant Reformation and the restructuring of Europe, politically and socially. Although the methods and concepts underlying exploration, renaissance, and reformation seemed to suddenly appear on the time line of history, closer examination reveals that this period formed the height of Christendom, the culmination of forces set in motion during the collapse of Rome in the west, the establishment of the Barbarian kingdoms, and the rise of Roman Catholicism nearly one

thousand years before. As Columbus suggested, following the light of reason and conscience, figuratively "the sun," Europe left the Old World and sailed toward the new, modern age.

Part III

Modern Times

CHAPTER 9

Absolutism and the Age of Reason

> The monarch shall from this day forth be revered and considered the most perfect and supreme person on the Earth by all his subjects, standing above all human laws and having no judge above his person, neither in spiritual nor temporal matters, except God alone.
>
> —The *King's Law of Denmark*, 1665

Introduction

The period between 1600 and 1750 was one of deep political and intellectual change in Europe. Often called an Age of Absolutism, in reference to the concentration of power into the hands of monarchs who could exercise near-absolute power within their kingdoms, it was also an Age of Science and of Reason. The reader may recall that chapter 6 discussed a growing "crisis of authority" within Western civilization in the Late Middle Ages, and the effects of this crisis are summarized as follows:

- The authority of the nobility was challenged as commerce provided the primary source of wealth rather than land (particularly fiefs).
- The authority of the monarch was strengthened as new methods of royal taxation were invented and extended, providing kings and queens with independent sources of revenue not subject to strong objection or direct oversight by competing aristocrats.
- The Reformation challenged the authority of the church, in some cases beyond repair. Much of the German-speaking Holy Roman Empire was forever lost to Catholicism, as was nearly all of Scandinavia and England. Protestantism also spread to English settlements in North America.
- The Counter-Reformation reinvigorated a reformed Catholicism in much of Europe and was spread around the globe by Roman Catholic nations such as Spain and Portugal.
- Renaissance humanism provided a widely accepted basis for secular ethics, allowing societies and governments to determine issues of right and wrong on the basis of reason in connection with—or sometimes in the place of—religious faith and the commandments of an all-powerful God.
- Renaissance individualism placed emphasis upon the role of government, rather than religion, as the guarantor of individual self-realization.

This crisis would continue, deepen, and spread between 1600 and 1750. Monarchs would, as a general rule, gradually acquire near-absolute power primarily at the expense of the aristocratic nobility. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), a political philosopher whom we will study later in great detail, divided the power of the state into the powers of the "purse" (i.e., revenue) and of the "sword" (i.e., military and police powers). We will review below how various absolutist monarchies used these two fundamental powers, sometimes quite differently.

Some monarchies changed back and forth between Catholicism and Protestantism. This was the case in England and in Sweden. Queen Christina of Sweden (1626–1689) provides a notable example of the consequences of switching religious affiliation, especially during these tense times for monarchs. Crowned a few years before the end of the Thirty Years' War, she became queen of an expanding nation. In 1651 she managed to insult the nobility in several ways: she created almost four hundred new peerages and filled them with her own people, diluting the influence of the old aristocracy, belatedly offering to abdicate the throne in response to aristocratic pressure, she left Stockholm for Rome, stopping along the way to abandon Lutheran Church of Sweeden and convert to Roman Catholicism. She thereafter lived in Rome with her numerous lay and clerical lovers, but became a nonentity in Sweden, losing virtually all influence there. Christina lost her throne by allowing her commitment to Protestant Lutheranism to weaken. In another example, Charles of England (see below) would lose his head, in significant part over the issue of religious affiliation.

New humanist philosophers and thinkers emerged and took sides, some supporting absolutist royal power, others arguing for restraining the powers of the crown under a constitutional monarchy. Philosophers such as Jean Bodin (1530–1596) argued in support of the divine rights of absolutist monarchs, arguing that the monarch was above the law. Others, such as John Locke (1632–1704, see below also) concluded that the monarch, like every other person within the realm, was not above the law and was therefore subject to it. He also argued that the state should provide individual guarantees against predation of property in the form of both natural and positive rights, securing the right of subject peoples to "happiness."

Royal Absolutism

Royal absolutism may be defined as a theory of sovereign (or supreme) power vested in a monarch who is restrained by neither a constitution, written or unwritten, nor the law. Jean Bodin (1530–1596), widely regarded as a late-sixteenth-century champion of royal absolutism, put it this way in Book I of his treatise *On Commonwealths*:

> It is the distinguishing mark of the sovereign that he cannot in any way be subject to the commands of another.… That is why it is laid down in the civil law that *the prince is above the law.*… [This] applies both to former acts of the prince himself, and to those of his predecessors.… If the prince is not bound by the laws of his predecessors, still less can he be bound by his own laws. (Bodin, 319-321).

This may remind the reader of Machiavelli's arguments in his Renaissance work *The Prince*. But whereas Machiavelli urged pragmatism, Bodin argued for a comprehensive theory of state power and definition of good governance in which the power of the crown was not restrained in law. In other words, the monarch was above the law and answerable to no one but God.

Political theory alone, however, was quite insufficient to secure and maintain absolutist power. Power, as Hobbes indicated, came from two sources: (1) the sword and (2) the purse. To secure these two powers, monarchs resorted to the creation of the modern standing army and the modern state bureaucracy.

The Standing Army

A *standing army* is a permanent professional career military that does not disband in time of peace. No widespread use of large standing armies had been seen in Western Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire in the west (chapter 3) until after the Thirty Years' War. Following that war, the standing army was not only common but necessary to the survival of the state. The standing army not only affected the military sphere, but all other aspects of government as well. Equipping, recruiting, training, deploying, and feeding the standing army required resources well beyond the capacity of previous systems of governance. This required training camps and staff, revenue-collecting bureaucrats, and reliable national budgets. British historian Sir George Norman Clark observed that "just as the modern state was needed to create the standing army, so the standing army created the modern state. The influence of the two causes was reciprocal" (Bendix, 190). The standing army, which (for the most part) obeyed only the monarch's orders, gave the crown control of Hobbes's "sword."

Bureaucracy

The number-one task of a modern bureaucracy was to collect tax revenue. Revenues supported the lifestyle of the monarch, to be sure, but also provided for the operation of courts and minimal communications infrastructure. A steady stream of tax revenue was necessary to support a standing army, which became a critical instrument of internal and external power concentrated in the hands of the monarch. The bureaucracy required staffing, and modern absolutist monarchs had two sources of bureaucrats: first, university-trained professionals (lawyers, accountants, and so forth); and second, the noble aristocracy, through an adaptation of the feudal land-based system of fiefs and through the extension of privileges. The professional bureaucracy was loyal to the monarch because he controlled their employment. And the nobility was, for the most part, loyal, because of the local power and the tax exemptions gained through royal privileges. Both groups of bureaucrats existed largely at the whim and sufferance of the monarch, which again concentrated royal power. Royal control of revenue collection and use gave the crown essential control over Hobbes's "purse."

Examples of Absolutism

The rulers of every major kingdom in Europe attempted to implement—or did, in fact, implement—royal absolutism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although absolutism was essentially ubiquitous, this chapter will focus on five important states that will eventually become the European Great Powers of the nineteenth century and World War I (see chapters 8 and 9): Prussia (which would become Germany in 1871), Austria, Russia, England, and France. Our review of these countries takes into consideration important aspects of absolutist power:

Brandenburg-Prussia

The establishment of an absolutist state in Prussia coincided with the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648, see chapter 6). Prince Frederick William (r. 1640–1688), also known as the great elector, ruled the duchy of Brandenburg-Prussia, the dominant state within the patchwork of principalities known as the Holy Roman Empire. Frederick was able to consolidate Prussian territorial holdings in what is now east-central Germany through the establishment of a

professional standing army, staffed with officers drawn from the Prussian noble aristocracy, called Junkers. The Prussian army went from about a thousand soldiers to over eighty thousand in a matter of decades. In addition to consolidating his control of the sword, Frederick devised a two-part system of taxation to strengthen his power over the purse. The towns and cities paid a higher tax than that charged on rural lands and agriculture, resulting in both the perpetuation of serfdom and underdevelopment of towns, as well as discouraging the emergence of a powerful urban middle class. Since the Junker's wealth and power was land-based, he was able to win their support. Prussia evolved into a militaristic state ruled by a landed aristocracy, with the prince at the pinnacle, a political and social situation that remained largely unchanged until the early twentieth century.

Habsburg Austria (1526–1804)

The Thirty Years' War impacted the territories of the Holy Roman Empire more than any other region of Europe, and the Habsburg dynasty of Austria, who dominated the office of the Holy Roman emperor during the war, bore the brunt of these losses. However, shortly after the war, they retook several regions, such as Bohemia (the modern Czech Republic). They won the support of the Czech aristocracy through the reestablishment of Roman Catholicism and the termination of Protestantism in Bohemia (see chapter 6, Jan Hus and the Hussites). During the reign of Leopold I (r. 1658–1705), the Habsburgs conquered Hungary, which had been under the control of the Ottoman Turks. The resulting Peace of Karlowitz (1699) secured Habsburg domination over much of the Danube River basin in central Europe. Like the Prussian princes, the Habsburg emperors created a professional standing army, commanded by noble aristocrats. Unlike Prussia, Austria was a multiethnic and multilingual realm. The empire included German speakers, Czechs, Hungarians, Italians, Croatians, and other diverse peoples. So long as there was no strong popular national sentiment (such as was increasingly found in England and France (see chapters 5 and 6), Habsburg rule was secure. That would change in the course of the nineteenth century (chapter 8). The Habsburgs were able to hold the empire together by working through the aristocracy, backed by the threat of the sword posed by the emperor's standing army. Like Prussia, reliance upon the aristocracy meant the extension of taxation privileges that negatively impacted urban development and the rise of a powerful middle class. This would ultimately work against the empire by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Russia under the Tsars

Russia emerged as a regional East European power in the late sixteenth century, principally during the reign of Ivan the Terrible (r. 1533–1584, also called "the Fearsome"). The principality of Russia expanded eastward and southward through the conquest of the Khanates of Sibir (Siberia), Kazan, and Astrakhan. The conquest of the latter spread the Russian state all the way to the Caspian Sea, covering nearly one billion acres. Ivan took the royal title tsar (Russian, "Caesar") and successfully brought much of the nobility under tsarist control.

Building later upon Ivan's foundation, Tsar Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725), a member of the powerful aristocratic Romanov family, expanded Russia's territory westward into the Baltic Sea region. Known as a westernizing reformer, he focused upon modernizing the army and navy. Russia's chief tactical challenge was its comparative lack of trade access to the sea, particularly its lack of "warm-water ports," those harbors that could remain operational year-round.

Essentially confined to the Baltic Sea and Black Sea regions, Peter succeeded in expanding Russia's foothold along the Baltic coast, but was unable to dislodge the Ottoman Turks from the region or loosen their control of Istanbul and the eastern Mediterranean Sea. He also succeeded in modernizing the government, creating a Senate consisting of ten royal appointees and several *collegia* (bureaus or departments of the government), such as the Collegium of Justice, the Collegium of Foreign Affairs, and the Collegium of Revenue. Tsarist control of the Senate was undisputed.

Peter the Great brought the Russian nobility, particularly the highest traditional rank of nobility called *boyars*, under his control through the creation of the Table of Ranks, which systematized and structured civil service and nobility into fourteen ranks. The Table of Ranks allowed nonnobles to rise through the ranks of the professional civil service. Peter reformed the tax system and secured taxation over such goods as salt and over such practices as wearing beards. Peter the Great knew that he needed more revenue than mere reform could provide and instituted a controversial poll tax (a tax on each person in a family or village). He also deepened the servitude of Russian serfs, tying them even more to the land through a series of royal decrees and generally increasing the power of landowners over their serfs. Thus, while reforming the government, taxation, and the military along modern lines, land usage and serfdom resembled medieval feudalism more than any other major European power.

These contradictions between modernizing reform and medieval retrenchment would come to a violent head in the late nineteenth century and eventually culminate in the October Revolution of 1917, which established the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (see chapter 9). Russia appeared to take one step backward for each modernizing step forward under the Romanov dynasty (which lasted until Tsar Nicholas II was assassinated in 1917, see chapter 9).

England and the Glorious Revolution

If England ever practiced royal absolutism, it was during the reign of the Tudor dynasty, particularly during the reign of Henry VIII (1509–1547) and his daughter Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603). Henry VIII is popularly known for his six marriages, each resulting from his drive to produce a male heir to the throne. His serial marriages, facilitated by his rather free hand in divorcing or executing his wives, many of whom were themselves of nobility or royalty, demonstrate his domination of the English aristocracy: he divorced his first wife, annulled another, executed two more, with two dying after giving birth. Henry used the occasion of his divorce from Catherine of Aragon to sever formal association with the papacy and the Roman Catholic Church (see chapter 6) and to create the Church of England, staffed with a priesthood beholden to the crown and not to Rome. His reliance upon university-trained bureaucrats, such as Sir Thomas More (see chapter 6), illustrates his control of administration and bureaucracy. In many respects, he was an ideal absolute monarch: powerful, pragmatic, ruthless, and feared.

Tudor England through Queen Elizabeth I

Three of Henry's children ruled England. Edward VI (r. 1547–1553) was the son of Henry and his third wife, Jane Seymour; Mary I (r. 1553–1558) was the daughter of Henry and Catherine of Aragon; and Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603) was the daughter of Henry and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth alone enjoyed a lengthy (forty-four-year) reign. Edward and Mary had taken opposing sides in religious affairs: Edward revised the Book of Common Prayer,

regulating worship and services much to the consternation of his Calvinist subjects, whereas Mary attempted to restore Roman Catholicism. Elizabeth attempted to end religious contention through the Uniformity Act of 1558 and the Religious Settlement of 1559, but these laws did not end religious contention so much as postpone it. Although exercising significant influence over her subjects and over the nobility, Elizabeth's motto was *video et taceo* ("I see, and say nothing"). Her reign is referred to as the Elizabethan Era, famous for its poets, such as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, and the derring-do naval adventures of Sir Francis Drake. Elizabeth was politically adept. Contrary to her father, who married six times, Elizabeth never married, and was known as the Virgin Queen as a result. She nevertheless was able to moderate the influence of other foreign powers such as Spain and France by extending the possibility of marriage to the ruling families of these rival nations. Henry's preoccupation with producing an heir had made numerous enemies in England and elsewhere, but Elizabeth's unwillingness to marry and produce an heir left the field wide-open for rival claimants following her death.

The Stuart Dynasty

The crown of England passed to James I (r. 1603–1625, known also as James VI, King of Scotland), the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, a member of the house of Stuart. James came to England already possessed of absolutist aspirations. James wrote, and in 1608 published, a tract entitled *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies*. The tract set out James's concept of the "Divine Right of Kings," meaning that as king he was not responsible to any earthly authority, but was responsible to God alone for his actions. Following his coronation in England, James was well received at first, perhaps owing to the poor financial condition of the country following wars with Spain (see the Spanish Armada in chapter 6), corruption within Elizabeth's administration, and a series of poor harvests in the 1590s.

The reader may recall the seesaw relationship between Catholicism and Protestantism in England: Henry VIII promoted Protestantism mainly as the political means to divorce Catherine of Aragon, Edward VI attempted genuine Protestant religious reform through the *Common Book of Prayers*, Mary I attempted to restore England to Catholicism, and Elizabeth legalized the split with Rome. James was Roman Catholic, a fact that inspired hope among his Catholic subjects and dread among Protestants. Catholics in England had been persecuted under Elizabeth, but in the early months of James's reign, they openly declared their religion in the hope of royal support. Instead, English administrators became alarmed and resorted to persecution. In response, a few Catholic subjects attempted to assassinate the king. Prominent English Catholics Robert Catesby and Guy Fawkes devised the "Gunpowder Plot," a conspiracy to assassinate James and members of the House of Lords by means of a gunpowder explosion in 1605. The plot was discovered and they were executed, resulting in widespread anti-papist (i.e., anti-Catholic) hysteria.

James I and Absolutism

James leveraged the situation to claim additional powers, but was increasingly challenged by Parliament and a growing number of the lower aristocracy, called "gentry." Sir Edward Coke (1552–1634, pronounced "Cook"), chief justice of the King's Bench and a member of the House

of Lords, challenged James openly in one famous example. According to the story, as related later by Coke, James asserted the right to try his subjects in person, without resort to the courts of England. Here was a direct assertion of absolutist power, the right of the king to act without legal restraint, answerable to no one and to no power but God alone. James reasoned that since he appointed the judges, they were only his ministers and "shadows," and that he had the power to try cases in their place. James further argued that the law was based upon reason, and that he could reason as well as his judges could and therefore could take their place. Coke responded that although the law employed reason and that the king was endowed with great "natural science," the law also required a special sort of reasoning that only training and experience could impart, and that the king lacked such training and experience, noting that King James was "not learned in the law of his realm of England." James responded by declaring that it was treason to claim that the king should be subject to the law. In response to James's obvious anger and indignation, Coke continued in Latin, quoting a famous English jurist named Brackton: "*quod rex non debet esse sub homine sed sub deo et lege*" ("The king should be subject to no human being, but should be subject to God *and the law*"). James shook his fist and offered to strike Coke, who wisely fell on all fours in subjection to the king, but who nevertheless continued to maintain that the king was not above the law. In other words, Coke refused to recognize the king's claim to absolutist authority and maintained that the king was as subject to the law as any other subject of the realm. But this was not the end of the debate, nor of the conflict over royal absolutism in England.

Parliamentary Factions

James faced a growing threat from another quarter within Parliament: the House of Commons. The English Parliament arguably had its origins in the Magna Carta of 1215, in which King John recognized certain powers as belonging to the barons. The barons met off and on following the signing of the Magna Carta. By 1295 the assembly included representatives of the towns (boroughs). In 1314, Parliament was divided into two "houses." The House of Lords was composed at that time exclusively of hereditary nobility called "peers of the crown." The House of Commons was composed of elected "gentry," that is, of noteworthy men who operated large rural estates and whose support was necessary for the fiscal operation of the realm. The Commons also included more and more *commerçants* and merchants, particularly those living in port cities such as Liverpool and London. From the 1370s onward, the House of Commons asserted powers that eventually conflicted with claims of royal absolutism. For example, in the late fourteenth century, the House of Commons claimed, and occasionally exercised, the power to impeach royal officials on charges of corruption, the power to control all taxes, and the power to approve and budget royal expenditures. In other words, the House of Commons claimed the power to check the king in matters of the "purse." Members of Commons, whose interests competed at times with those of the peerage (hereditary high nobles) and with the crown, resented James (who was, after all, a foreigner from Scotland) and his claims to absolute power. Following James's death, the conflict came into the open following the ascension of Charles I (r. 1625–1649) to the throne.

Charles, who also claimed absolute power, decided to rule without Parliament and did so for eleven years, beginning in 1628. Manipulating existing taxes—recall that the king could not impose new taxes without the consent of Parliament—Charles managed to get by. Had it not been for a series of internal revolts, he might have succeeded. A revolt in Ireland required a

military response, and that required more revenue than could be obtained by tax manipulations. The Commons had already stated and restated its grievances against Charles and was reluctant to pass control of the army to the king. Charles responded in 1642 by attempting to arrest five leading MPs (Members of Parliament), but they had already been warned and eluded capture. The king had exposed his hand without suppressing the opposition, and his attempted coup d'état proved very unwise. A civil war ensued, inaugurating the English Revolution. Parliament, supported largely by an increasingly powerful gentry, a financially stable merchant class, and a nascent English "middle class," possessed greater resources than the king. The Parliamentarians, nicknamed "Roundheads," used their resources to create a professional army, called the New Model Army. It proved quite effective. The civil wars lasted from 1642 to 1648, ending in the defeat of Charles. Parliament established a court and found Charles guilty of treason. He was publicly beheaded in 1649. His execution sent a clear message that England would not tolerate royal absolutism. The execution of Charles I, a reigning king, was repeated in the French Revolution nearly a century and a half later.

The English Revolution

Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), an MP and a member of the gentry, emerged during the civil wars as the leader of Parliamentary opposition and became the most powerful man in England. In 1649, Parliament declared the Commonwealth (in this case "Republic") of England. The monarchy and the House of Lords were (temporarily, as it turned out) abolished. The new government was called the Protectorate, and Cromwell became the ruling Lord Protector. The Lord Protector governed under a written constitution. The first Protectorate lasted until the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658.

In 1652, Cromwell, angered at England's involvement in what he considered avoidable wars and the slowness of Parliament to enact reforms, dissolved Parliament. In a bold constitutional experiment, Cromwell created the "Nominated Parliament," whose members were not elected, but who were instead "godly men" appointed by the commanders of the New Model Army. Religion, unfortunately for Cromwell, proved to be an insufficient basis for selecting lawmakers, and the Nominated Parliament split into two groups, commonly termed "radical" and "moderate." For well over a decade (after 1642), religious conservatives had pressed for the literal imposition of biblical laws: adultery should be a crime punishable by death, for example. The radical wing now called for a termination of the payment of church tithes and for sweeping legal reforms. Moderates in the Nominated Parliament grew alarmed at the strong Puritan streak of the conservatives and the strong reaction of the radicals.

An attempt was made to establish a second Protectorate following Oliver Cromwell's death. His son, Richard Cromwell, became Lord Protector in 1658, but quickly lost the confidence of the New Model Army and was deposed in less than two years, ending the second Protectorate. The splits in Parliament and in society thereafter deepened, and it appeared that England had abandoned monarchy and absolutism only to trade them for anarchy. Clearly the country was not ready for republican government.

Constitutional Monarchy

In 1660 the monarchy was restored, and Charles II (r. 1660–1685, son of the ill-starred Charles I) was placed on the throne. The new king, however, was more constrained by the rule of law than his predecessors.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the English revolutions of the seventeenth century—and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in particular—was the establishment of constitutional monarchy through passage of the English Bill of Rights of 1689. This bill of rights formalized Parliamentary restraints upon royal power:

1. Only Parliament could pass laws.
2. The crown could not suspend Parliament.
3. Members of Parliament were immune from prosecution for official acts of office.
4. The crown could impose no tax without Parliament's consent.
5. The crown could not raise an army without Parliament's approval.
6. Standing armies were prohibited in peacetime.
7. Freedom of worship was extended to non-Anglican protestants (but not to Roman Catholics, however).
8. Only a protestant could become king or queen.

The English Bill of Rights of 1689 guaranteed that England's attempts at absolutism were at an end. England eventually succeeded in peacefully establishing a republican government in the form of a constitutional monarchy, accomplished over the next century and a half.

France under Louis XIV

Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715, soubriquet: "the Sun King") personified royal absolutism more than any other monarch in Europe. But few would have guessed at the future magnitude of his power when he became king at the tender age of four just a few years before the end of the Thirty Years' War following the death of his father, Louis XIII (r. 1610–1643). His father had narrowly avoided disaster in the civil war known as the Fronde and had come to rely upon the administration of two important Catholic cardinals, Richelieu (1585–1642) and Mazarin (1602–1661). Although Louis XIV was technically king, he would not be able to assume full power until he reached the age of majority. In the meantime, Mazarin and Louis's mother, Anne of Austria (1601–1666), ruled through a regency council. But other factors allowed Louis to expand and deepen his power over the next several decades. The most important factor favoring Louis turned out to be time: he reigned for an unprecedented seventy-two years and 110 days, a term so lengthy that it was his great-grandson who became Louis XV (r. 1715–1774). In fact, France had only three kings between 1643 and 1793, a stretch of one hundred and fifty years. Certainly this favored the acquisition of royal power and increased the likelihood of an absolutist French monarchy beginning with Louis XIV.

The Power of Pageant

Louis XIV aggregated power in an unusual way. He was an avid patron of the arts, and used theater, opera, and his new invention, ballet, to effectively spread propaganda and aggrandize his power. He took the *Académie Française* under his "protection," monopolizing the

production of art, drama, and literature throughout France, an essential step in the development of Baroque style (discussed below) in France and abroad. He promoted the work of artist Charles le Bruin (1619–1690), playwright Molière (1622–1673), and composer Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687), and they in turn promoted Louis.

Palace at Versailles

Louis turned a hunting lodge into the Palace at Versailles (located about fifteen miles southwest of Paris), perhaps the most impressive palace complex in modern Western history. The palace became a showplace for Louis and the heart of his government: the complex of buildings, gardens, and fountains covers nearly two thousand acres, has over twelve miles of roads, 200,000-plus trees, fifty fountains, sixty-seven staircases, six thousand paintings, 2,100 sculptures, and over 150 varieties of fruit trees in its gardens. The complex could house thousands of persons, including members of the royal house, resident nobles, bureaucrats, and servants. The palace was, in effect, a small city. Virtually everywhere one looked, there were symbols of Louis's power adapted from Greek mythological symbolism (he likened himself to the god Apollo), art, music, pageant, and sheer size. The Palace at Versailles emphasized Louis's declaration *l'état c'est moi*! (The state, it is I!).

Taming the Nobility

Louis made the nobility dependent upon him for favors. The French nobility, with its wealth based upon land and the produce of land, was gradually becoming collectively impoverished, and Louis's control of the immense state budget made him the source of favor and benefice. Many nobles were forced to live in Versailles to gain Louis's attention and garner favors. The king concurrently enhanced an already complex system of court etiquette and rules of behavior that was difficult for the increasingly dependent nobility to follow—and the slightest deviation would earn Louis's displeasure. Etiquette included knowing precisely how to knock on a door, where to sit, when to eat, what to wear, how to speak, and so forth, depending upon one's rank and constantly shifting status at the court. Failure to follow the ever-shifting rules limited access to the king and to royal benefices. To an outside observer it would likely seem excessively silly, but to the participants it was serious in the extreme. Members of the nobility were thus set in competition for Louis's attention, and intrigue was abundant. Nobles spent large sums attempting to win favor and rested little, resulting in some cases in the decline of their estates and their health. The crowning event that all aspired to involved watching Louis awake in the morning, as the rising sun: lucky observers were often granted an opportunity to ask for the golden favor they so desperately sought, and admittance to the ceremony was strictly guarded.

Bureaucracy and Administration

Louis created a competent, loyal, and comparatively efficient civil service entirely dependent upon him. By these means he acquired control over the power of the purse. Following the death of Cardinal Mazarin, Louis assumed full control of the realm but inherited prior officeholders, such as Nicolas Fouquet (1615–1680). Fouquet arranged the royal budget so as to

enrich himself and his favorites, a practice little different from that of Mazarin or Richelieu before him. He made, however, an important and great mistake. Fouquet invited the comparatively impoverished Louis to his palace and lavishly entertained the young monarch. Louis, in turn, had Fouquet arrested on charges of embezzlement. Fouquet was imprisoned from 1661 to 1680. He is widely regarded as the inspiration for the main character in Alexandre Dumas's novel *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683) replaced him as *Contrôleur Generale des Finances*. Colbert succeeded in curbing some of the extravagant spending and debt Louis inherited. Louis reformed the civil service through the extension of *intendants* (nonhereditary professionals referred to as an "administrative nobility," or *noblesse de robe*). *Intendants* implemented royal fiscal measures, taxation, and courts of justice throughout the realm, and acted as a police force ultimately answerable to Louis.

Military Reforms

Louis also gained control of the power of the sword through military reforms instituted by Michel le Tellier (1603–1685) and his son, the Marquis de Louvois (1641–1691). Louis constructed the *Hôpital des Invalides* in 1670, a home for wounded soldiers and presently the location of the tombs of famous French military commanders, such as Marshalls Foch and Vauban and Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Both Le Tellier and Louvois worked to break the hold of the hereditary high nobility (*noblesse d'épée*, or nobility of the sword) upon military command, relying instead upon well-trained professionals and Louis's own appointees.

Wars

Louis created the most powerful army in the world and used it extensively in several wars that nearly bankrupted the nation. One war in particular, the Wars of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), turned into a major Europe-wide conflict and even extended to British and French colonial possessions in North America (known there as Queen Anne's War). Spain had become weak during the seventeenth century to the point where Louis hoped to gain control over Spain and its other possessions in Europe (Milan, the Spanish Netherlands, and Naples) as well as Spain's colonial possessions in the Indies. Fearing a shift in the balance of power should such a unification of France and Spain occur, the Archduke Charles of Austria joined forces with the Holy Roman Empire, Great Britain, the Dutch Republic, and Portugal in the Grand Alliance. On the other side, Louis XIV of France, Philip V of Spain, and the elector of Bavaria formed the Alliance of the Two Crowns. Although Louis's attempt at unification proved ultimately unsuccessful, the war cost a great deal, and when Louis died shortly after, the nation's finances were under stress. The Grand Alliance's victory was, however, Pyrrhic; the war proved costly to all involved.

Lasting Significance of the Sun King

Louis XIV more nearly achieved absolute power than the other monarchs of Europe, yet his power came at a price. While alive, and for the next fifty or so years after his death, France was prosperous enough and powerful enough to weather the financial and social storms occasioned during the age of French Absolutism. His successor, Louis XV, apparently learned

few lessons in fiscal responsibility from his great-grandfather: tradition holds that Louis XV ignored concerns over his extravagance, saying "*après moi, le deluge*" ("After me comes the flood"). The flood did, figuratively, come in 1789, in the form of the French Revolution (see chapter 8). It was both bloody and of lasting consequence for the crown, and indeed for Europe and the world.

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment, also called the Age of Reason, was an intellectual, political, social, and cultural movement that sought the replacement of traditional concepts of authority, such as faith and revelation, with human reason. This does not imply that the humans of prior ages were irrational or failed to use reason, but instead refers to the emergence of new methodologies, new ways of reasoning, and new ways to employ the human intellect to solve problems and reimagine the world and the nature of existence. Enlightenment culture and practices promoted scientific and intellectual exchange and generally opposed perceived abuses of church and state, which were attacked as a perpetuation of ignorance and superstition. Participants in the movement saw their works as the liberation of the human mind. They did not themselves initially use the term *Enlightenment*, which was coined in the eighteenth century by Immanuel Kant (see below) in the title of his essay "Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" The era witnessed a comparative explosion of thinkers, writers, artists, and musicians, far too many to include in this brief work. Instead, a few salient examples and biographies are offered in the hope that the reader will be better equipped to explore this rich era of Western civilization on his or her own.

This chapter began by identifying the growing crisis of authority following the economic, intellectual, and demographic disruptions of the High Middle Ages, the challenges posed to tradition during the Renaissance, and the partially successful attack on inherited papal authority resulting from the Protestant Reformation. We have already reviewed one response to this crisis of authority: assertions of autocratic power through absolute monarchy. We now give attention to intellectual and artistic reformulations of authority based upon the exercise of reason as an alternative to, or as a governing influence over, the powers of the purse and sword. Given the lasting influence of Enlightenment principles and methods, one wonders whether the old adage is indeed true—that the pen is mightier than the sword.

The Age of Reason

The establishment of an Age of Reason occurred in connection with the emergence and spread of scientific methodology grounded in a more rigorous empiricism and experimentation, coupled with the increased adoption of rationalism in philosophy, which was applied to nearly every aspect of politics and theory.

The Scientific Revolution

The origin of modern science is popularly viewed as a sudden and modern event, but in a real way owes its origins to the methods of other cultures, including Islamic civilization (see chapter 4). Nevertheless, the spirit of empirical investigation and experimentation offered an alternative to religious explanations of the cosmos and to the inadequate natural philosophy of ancient thinkers such as Aristotle. Modern science thus played an important role in offering new

sources of authority in the time of an ongoing crisis of authority. The scientific revolution is a complex topic, and we have only room for the mention of its most prominent accomplishments and leading figures.

Nicolas Copernicus (1473–1543, Poland)

Polish astronomer and mathematician Nicolas Copernicus is credited with the beginning of modern science and astronomy, primarily through the publication of his book *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*) in 1543, just prior to his death. Copernicus demonstrated that the inherited view of the universe, with the earth at the center (called *geocentrism*), was incorrect. It is not clear just how much Copernicus owed to other preceding scientists, including Islamic astronomers Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201–1274) and Ibn al-Shatir (1304–1375), who spoke of the possibility of a sun-centered universe and developed the mathematics necessary for Copernicus's work, but Copernicus mathematically demonstrated what no one had previously shown:

- The sun, not the earth, was the center of the system of planets to which the earth belonged.
- The planets revolved in circles around the sun.
- The motion of the stars, the sun, the moon, and the planets was only "apparent motion," caused by the movement of the earth.

The publication of his work provoked intense controversy. In the popular mind, that controversy is thought to have originated with Roman Catholic leaders, but in fact the Christian community in general was agitated. John Calvin attacked Copernicus's theories, as did Philipp Melanchthon, a companion and supporter of Martin Luther. Melanchthon concluded that the theory was "crazy" and that its publication and dissemination should have been repressed by governmental force. It apparently did not occur to Calvin, Melanchthon, or others that they knew less of the matter than Copernicus. Their inherited sense of authority, grounded in a particular reading of scripture and the natural science of Aristotle, Ptolemy, and others, was sufficient to make them confident in their views. In fairness, the methods and reasoning of science were foreign to traditionalists and posed a threat to their sense of authority and truth.

Johannes Kepler (1571–1630, Holy Roman Empire)

The theories of Copernicus proved both correct and incorrect: the sun *was* the center of the planetary system, but the planets did not move in circles. Johannes Kepler, in the spirit of scientific investigation and empirical investigation, corrected Copernicus, demonstrating that the planets moved in ellipses, not circles. (Kepler, too, was incorrect, but this would not be known for centuries until science concluded that the sun, too, moves, and that an ellipse requires a fixed point in space, which does not exist in an absolute sense.) Kepler exemplified the observational aspect of modern science. Whereas Copernicus was limited by the empirical data available to him, Kepler drew upon the detailed observations made over the course of many years by Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546–1601). Based upon the observations of planetary motion made by Brahe, Kepler concluded that the planets did not move in circles. Continued observation and ongoing correction eventually became a central feature of science.

Galileo Galilei (1564–1642, Italy)

Galileo cast the growing conflict between religion and science into stark relief. Galileo was among the first Europeans to adapt the telescope for use in the study of astronomy. Its use in his discovery of Jupiter's moons illustrates how Galileo's new observational methods and subsequent discoveries produced intense controversy within the growing crisis of authority between religion and science. On January 7, 1610, he observed what he thought were three new stars in a fixed line obscured by their proximity to Jupiter. On January 10, he observed that their positions had changed, causing him to question whether or not the objects were fixed stars. On January 13, he saw a fourth "star." He concluded that these were not stars at all, but were satellites (moons) of Jupiter; there was an orbital system of celestial objects within the solar system itself. Christopher Clavius (1538–1612) confirmed Galileo's observations in 1611, demonstrating another feature of the emerging sciences: independent verification of observations.

Galileo was hailed as a hero. He thereafter composed a book called the *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, in which he contrasted the work of natural philosophers with the new science. Pope Urban VIII (1568–1644) considered the work offensive, and Galileo was arrested by the Roman Inquisition, tried, convicted, and placed under house arrest for the remainder of his life. Although under house arrest, Galileo wrote yet another influential book, *Two New Sciences*, which defined the branches of science now known as kinematics and strength of materials. Galileo's discoveries had practical applications as well. For example, numerical tables, known as *ephemerides*, which listed the relative positions of Jupiter's four moons (Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Calisto) at a given time, were used in navigation to pinpoint the observer's longitude within a spherical coordinate system. In other words, using the *ephemerides*, people could determine how far east or west they were from a fixed location, such as Greenwich, England.

Isaac Newton (1642–1727, England)

Although great strides had been made in clarifying the organization of the heavens and the earth's place in the cosmos, no one had been able to describe *why* the cosmos moved the way it did. Newton did in his 1615 book *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (*The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, commonly called *The Principia* in English). Newton identified gravity as the force that powered the motion of the cosmos through the natural attraction of one mass toward others. This principle, called universal gravitation, stated that the force of attraction between objects (including the planets) is directly proportional to their masses, and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. This essential observation, and the mathematics associated with it, allowed the United States to land on and bring back from the moon the first humans in 1969. Newton also devised three laws of motion, stated in layman's terms as: (1) an object at rest tends to stay at rest unless an external force is exerted upon it (inertia); (2) the rate of change of momentum an object experiences is directly proportional to the force acting upon it (force); and (3) for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction (action/reaction). He is also credited with developing the mathematics (calculus) necessary for his theories. Newton used the work of Kepler (and by extension, the observations of Tycho Brahe) to prove his theory.

Until the advent of subatomic physics and quantum theory toward the beginning of the twentieth century, Newton's laws of motion remained unchallenged, and at the super-atomic level are functional and essentially correct. Galileo and Newton had each uncovered what they termed "laws," fixed universal principles that functioned in all times and in all places, "truths" that were traditionally associated not with reason, but with revelation. The crisis of religious versus scientific authority was deepening.

Deism. Several Enlightenment thinkers and scientists, troubled by what they perceived to be the superstition and blind reliance upon traditional authority of organized religion, continued to believe in God, but a God that could be rationally understood. The result was called Deism. The French philosopher Voltaire (see below) expressed the central concept of deism:

> What is faith? Is it to believe that which is evident? No. It is perfectly evident to my mind that there exists a necessary, eternal, supreme, and intelligent being. This is no matter of faith, but of reason (Portable Voltaire, 222).

Often rejecting holy books and scripture, deists viewed God largely in terms of a creator, or a master scientist, if you will, who governed the universe by principles and according to laws that could be discovered and understood by human reason without the need for revelation or miracles. Science and religion not only came into conflict over cosmology, but certain scientists and thinkers now disagreed over questions of theology, a conflict of authority that religionists took very seriously.

Philosophy

Like the emerging empirical sciences, Enlightenment philosophy played a key role in inaugurating an Age of Reason. Enlightenment philosophy was premised upon the critical application of reason in defining and solving problems, instead of resorting to accepted tradition and authority or arguing merely from an authority-driven basis. For example, prior philosophers often cited scripture or the statements of Aristotle (who was dubbed "the Philosopher") or Averroes (Arabic, Ibn Rushd, who was known in the West as "the Commentator") as sources of authority sufficient to certify proofs or to justify philosophical conclusions. Enlightenment thinkers found this increasingly unacceptable and required clear rational proofs for their conclusions. In the following section, we will review the contributions of several philosophers during the Age of Reason.

René Descartes (1596–1650, France)

Descartes, a French philosopher, established a system of thought centered upon the capacity of humans to reason as a central feature of being and existence. His famous Latin phrase *cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am") formed the core concept from which his thought, named Cartesian Rationalism after him, proceeded. His influence became so extensive that he is often called the Father of Modern Philosophy. In addition to contributions in philosophy, Descartes was a brilliant mathematician, credited with the creation of analytical geometry (a

marriage of algebra and geometry) and the Cartesian coordinate system, which allowed a point in space to be expressed as a series of numbers, the basis of the modern land-surveying system, space travel, and the GPS system. Readers tasked with plotting lines on a graph in their algebra homework have Descartes to thank.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804, Prussia)

Immanuel Kant was born in Königsberg, Prussia, and lived during the time of Prussia's greatest "enlightened despot," King Frederick the Great. Kant's major work, *Critique of Pure Reason*, attacked the concept that objects exist outside of human reason:

> It always remains a scandal of philosophy and universal human reason that the existence of things outside us … should have to be assumed merely on faith, and that if it occurs to anyone to doubt it, we should be unable to answer him with a satisfactory proof.… Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but … let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition (Allison, 305).

Kant also wrote on ethics, most notably in his *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. He detested subjective formulations of ethics or morals and attempted to create universal, rational justifications for human behavior. For example, he stated:

> Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end (Gregor, xxii).

Consequently, chattel slavery would be unjustifiable under Kant's ethical formulations, since it dehumanizes the slave and makes him or her a *means* to the slave owner's private *ends*. The proposition in this formulation may appear equivalent to the Golden Rule (do to others that which you would have them do to you), and indeed the aim of the two ethical mandates is the same. Kant's ethical imperatives were universal—applicable to all individuals, at all times, and in all places.

Philosophy: Politics and Government

The near-absolutist realities of seventeenth-century government attracted both supporters and detractors among Enlightenment thinkers. The differences between supporters and detractors centered upon their view of human nature, as discussed below.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679, England)

Hobbes, mentioned above in relation to his division of state power into the purse and the sword as expressed in his book *Leviathan* (1651), was a champion of royal absolutism. He justified government on the basis of a social contract (either expressed or implied). Under this theory, shared by many political thinkers during the Enlightenment, humans possessed rights that

they voluntarily surrendered to the government in exchange for common protection. In this respect, Hobbes differed little from John Locke (below). It was Hobbes's view of human nature that led to his support of royal absolutism. Human individuals were, he argued, naturally depraved, governed not by reason but by passion and appetite. If left to themselves, they would engage in *bellum omnium contra omnes*, a "war of all against all." In chapter 13 of *Leviathan*, Hobbes concluded that:

> In such [a depraved and violent natural] condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the *life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short* (77).

To summarize Hobbes's position, human nature itself required, perhaps even demanded, a strong and powerful absolutist government, with power concentrated in the hands of a single person who would be able to bring humanity under control for the good of all. To achieve this end, humans entered into the social contract and surrendered their freedoms to the monarch. The controlled pursuit of self-interest by each member of society is the essence of government.

John Locke (1632-1704, England)

Locke, like Hobbes, subscribed to social contract theory. His view of human nature was, however, quite different. He argued that individuals are born without preexisting innate ideas, the human mind being *tabula rasa*, a "blank slate" upon which we write our consciousness. An Empiricist, Locke argued that our knowledge comes only from experience derived from sense perception. He also asserted, in contrast to Hobbes, that individual humans are not depraved, but have the faculty of reason and are capable of behaving with tolerance for each other. He maintained that humans were born with natural rights and that the only justifiable form of government was that in which individuals voluntarily surrendered some of their natural rights in exchange for the protection of their property. Because "the people" surrendered their rights for the good of all, they would remain the ultimate power and authority in government—that is, the "people" collectively would be the sovereign, not a single monarch. This concept is, unsurprisingly, called popular sovereignty. And although members of society would give up some of their natural rights, they would retain others, secured by the recognition of liberties protected by any legitimate government: rights to life, liberty, and property, subject to reasonable regulation for the good of all. Locke's ideas on proper government are set out in his *Second Treatise on Government*:

- "MEN being … by Nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be … subjected to the Political Power of another, *without his own Consent*" (52).
- "The great and chief end therefore, of Men uniting into Commonwealths, and putting themselves under Government, is the Preservation of their Property" (66).

- "There wants an establish'd, settled, known Law, received and allowed by common consent to be the Standard of Right and Wrong, and the common measure to decide all Controversies between them … [under the supervision of an] indifferent Judge" (66).
- "The first and fundamental positive Law of all Commonwealths, is the establishing of the Legislative Power" (69).
- "[T]he common Question will be made, Who shall be Judge whether the Prince or Legislative act contrary to their Trust?… To this I reply, the People shall be Judge" (123).
- "The Power that every individual gave the Society, when he entered into it, can never revert to the Individuals again, as long as the Society lasts … and the People have a Right to act as Supreme, and continue the Legislative in themselves, or erect a new Form, or under the old form place it in new hands, as they think good" (124).

Locke's opposition to royal absolutism was obvious. The effects of Locke's political theories will be presented in detail in chapter Eight when the subject of liberal republican revolution is discussed.

Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755, France)

Montesquieu articulated a theory of government based upon the separation of governmental powers so that no one governmental institution was responsible for the whole. He held that there were three essential forms of government: 1) monarchies, headed by a single hereditary ruler; 2) republics, led by elected leaders; and 3) despotisms, governed through fear by dictators. He also separated sovereign power from administrative power. For Hobbes, as we have seen, the monarch was sovereign and existed above the laws and was the sole source of legitimate (or sovereign) power within the realm. For Locke, the people were the only and supreme source of power, and no one was above the law. In the area of administrative powers, Montesquieu advocated the separation of three zones of power: executive, legislative, and judicial. Montesquieu's system of administrative separation of powers has been widely adopted and adapted in parliamentary systems around the world and in the American constitutional system. His views were antithetical to royal absolutism.

Voltaire (François-Marie Arouêt, 1694–1778, France)

Best known for his picaresque satire *Candide (or Optimism)* (1759), Voltaire was influential as a political philosopher as well as a writer. He was a strong advocate of civil liberties, most of which were opposed to the principles of royal absolutism: freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press. Although his support of civil liberties may have been natural to him, his advocacy may have been based on personal experience as well. Voltaire had offended a nobleman and received a beating from the nobleman's servants. Voltaire sought compensation, and the nobleman secured a *lettre de cachet* (a royal declaration of a defendant's guilt in a criminal proceeding, without trial or further legal process) against Voltaire. Signed by King Louis XV, the 1726 *lettre* resulted in the imprisonment of Voltaire in the infamous Bastille for almost a year, without a trial and without an opportunity to mount a legal defense. Although Voltaire was himself critical of organized religion and was a self-proclaimed deist, he advocated freedom of conscience.

Philosophy: The Social Sciences

Enlightenment-era thinkers believed that humans and human society could be understood rationally. Many of them believed that there were social or developmental "laws," just as there was a law of gravity. Many of the fields of study familiar today were anticipated, pioneered, or developed during the Enlightenment, although they also had ancient roots in classical, Christian, and Islamic civilization. These include history, anthropology, political science, education, and economics.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778, Geneva)

Rousseau, a well-known political philosopher and opponent of the ideas of Hobbes concerning human nature, influenced the field of education. His book *Émile, or On Education* (1762) traces the life of Émile through distinct stages of development and discusses the level of education appropriate to each level. In stages one and two (infancy and childhood), education consists of such things as weaning (i.e., liberty from the breast), toilet training (release from swaddling clothes), and learning to interact with others through such activities as playing outside. In stage three (puberty), the young man should learn a trade, such as carpentry, and perfect hand-brain coordination. In the fourth stage (young adult), a male begins his religious education, although a priest warns Émile that he should approach religion with skepticism and as a free thinker. In this stage, a man must also learn how society corrupts the individual, a lesson imparted through the study of history. Émile finally meets his wife-to-be, Sophie (meaning "wisdom"), and Rousseau briefly treats the subject of female education. Rousseau's influence continues today in the form of an education structured around stages of human development.

Adam Smith (1723–1790, England)

Smith's most famous work, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations,* was published in 1776 and is considered by many to be the first modern work on economics. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the treatise, at the time at least, was the concept of the "invisible hand." Although Smith had used the phrase in his *History of Astronomy* and his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he used it in economic terms as a reference to self-interest, or as more cynical observers might say, human greed. Smith maintained that all participants in an economy are not motivated by higher values or moral aspirations, but only by "his own gain." Thus, Smith wrote:

> It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity, but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages (Smith, Books 1-3, 119).

Perhaps in response to the obvious connection between the reality of the "invisible hand" and its probable equation with human greed, Smith commented, "By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote

it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good" (Smith, Books IV-V, 32).

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794, England)

We have already discussed the work of Edward Gibbon in chapter 3, with reference to the Roman Empire. His magnum opus, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, was published in six volumes between 1776 and 1788. Although much of the historical detail in the work has been subsequently corrected, it helped move the subject of history from a pastime into an academic discipline. The work is noted for the quality of its prose, its use of irony, the employment of primary sources, and its criticism of religion. Upon its completion, Gibbon wrote, "a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken my everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that, whatsoever might be the future date of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious" (Murray, 333-334).

Transmission of Enlightenment Ideas and Values

By the end of the sixteenth century, the printing press could be found throughout most of Western Europe, and an increasingly literate society read not only the Bible, translated by that time into several vernacular languages, but also novels, histories, plays, and poetry. Enlightenment ideals were increasingly transmitted to more and more persons, many of whom came from the gentry or the urban middle and professional classes. The theories of Hobbes, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others found their way into the hearts and minds of Europeans and Americans alike toward the end of the eighteenth century.

Salon Culture

Men dedicated to Enlightenment ideas, called *philosophes* in France, naturally found it difficult to obtain traditional aristocratic patronage. Not all aristocrats were opposed to the Enlightenment, even to those political ideas that arguably eroded traditional authority, but finding a wealthy patron willing to pay money to support them proved elusive. These men formed what became known as the Republic of Letters, and although they lived in diverse parts of Europe and America, they corresponded frequently, both privately and through the establishment of a few academic journals. In 1749, Madame Marie Therèse Rodet Geoffrin (1699–1777) opened her home in Paris to a series of weekly dinners, welcoming *philosophes* into what became known as Salon Culture. Such salon *soirées*, often hosted by prominent local women, sprang up in other parts of Europe and America. Participants in the Republic of Letters, which now increasingly included women, albeit in a private role, now had a home, so to speak: a place of meeting dominated by ideas, learned conversation, and good manners. Nevertheless, the *philosophes* spoke mainly to each other and looked for an expanded venue for their ideas.

Denis Diderot (1713–1784, France)

The Frenchman Denis Diderot, himself a *philosophe*, provided the ideal venue for the Republic of Letters to display and sell its intellectual wares. In 1751 he published the first volume of the *Encylopédie*, or *Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*. Diderot was the editor

in chief of this very ambitious project. In fact, the project had scarcely begun and was in an early manuscript stage when a formal legal action in 1752 brought it to a halt, accusing Diderot of producing subversive material. The case was dismissed due to a lack of evidence tying Diderot to the project. It turned out, amazingly, that the manuscripts needed to prosecute Diderot had been hidden in the very house of his main accuser, a man who was known as a staunch loyalist and absolutist, but who also believed in the literary merit of the project! It took Diderot twenty years to complete the entire project. The *Encyclopédie* consisted of:

- 17 volumes of articles;
- 11 volumes of illustrations;
- 18,000-plus pages of text;
- 75,000-plus entries organized into more than 44,000 main articles, 28,000 secondary articles, and 2,500 indexes of illustrations; and
- a print run of 4,200 copies, astounding for even a single-volume work in that time.

Diderot's introduction might be called the manifesto of the Enlightenment:

> [T]he goal of an *Encyclopédie* is to assemble all the knowledge scattered on the surface of the earth, to demonstrate the general system to the people with whom we live, & to transmit it to the people who will come after us, so that the work of centuries past is not useless to the centuries which follow, that our descendants, by becoming more learned, may become more virtuous & happier, & that we do not die without having merited being part of the human race (Blom, 139).

The work was translated into numerous languages and sold around the globe. Access to Enlightenment ideals and to a compendium of human knowledge was now widely available. Its full impact would be felt in the coming generation, as will be described in the next chapter on the Age of Revolutions.

Art and Music in the Age of Reason

The principles and ideals of absolutism contrast with those of the Enlightenment in several respects, as we have seen. In very broad terms, these two often-competing views of life, government, and society were reflected in art and music. Just as aristocrats and monarchs expressed themselves in art, literature, music, and drama (often Baroque in style), so too did the emerging gentry and urban middle class (often in neoclassical style). The debates over absolutism and popular government endemic to the Enlightenment thus found artistic expression and dissemination.

Baroque Style

Between about 1600 and 1750, the Baroque style dominated art, literature, music, and architecture. The Baroque, to a large degree associated with absolutism and statements of power, was dramatic, relied upon tension, and expressed itself in grandiose terms. From its origins in the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation, Baroque style attempted to produce a direct personal emotional engagement with religion and worship. Perhaps the greatest monumental statement of

the religious Baroque is St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. Completed and consecrated in 1629, the Basilica covers over 18,000 square yards and is nearly 212 yards in length, with a dome that rises to 435 feet and is 138 feet in diameter. Five of the most famous architects in modern history worked on it and died prior to its completion: Bramante, Raphael, Peruzzi, Antonio Sangallo the Younger, and Michelangelo. The Basilica is a powerful statement of Roman Catholic claims to apostolic authority. The Palace at Versailles, as discussed above, is perhaps the greatest Baroque statement of royal absolutist authority and power.

In contrast to preceding Renaissance composers, whose work is less performed today and who are (unfortunately) less well-known, music of the Baroque continues to be performed. This includes the work of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750, Prussia and the Holy Roman Empire), George Friedrich Handel (1685–1759, Prussia and England), Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741, Italy), and many others. Notable artists of the Baroque era include Michelangelo, Caravaggio (1571–1610, Rome), and Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680, Rome), famous for his exquisite sculptures.

Neoclassical Style

Inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment, neoclassical (i.e., "New Classical") art, literature, architecture, music, and drama emerged toward the last half of the eighteenth century. Neoclassicism drew directly upon the aesthetic examples left by ancient Greece and Rome. In contrast to the more flamboyant and emotional Baroque, neoclassicism emphasized restraint, preferred symmetry, sought natural harmony, and was often emotionally aloof. Famous classical composers include Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809, Austria) and his pupil Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791, Austria), whose music was diatonic and avoided dissonance in favor of consonance. The French painter Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825, France) was the preeminent neoclassical painter. His works were austere, drawing upon themes illustrating moral rectitude and dedication to civic duty, themes that inspired the revolutionaries of America and France and that contrasted with their general views of corrupt and self-centered monarchs and exalted the perceived virtues of the humble citizen-patriot. In the field of architecture, the Panthéon in Paris (completed in 1790) is among the signal civic monuments executed in the neoclassical style.

Conclusion

Post–Thirty Years' War civilization experienced a deepening crisis of authority (see chapter 6). The "discoveries" made in the Age of Exploration revealed the limited knowledge and experience of Europeans. Thinkers during the Renaissance challenged the authority of the church and urged a humanist view, in which reason—in addition to revelation—was a valid path to the knowledge of truth. The Reformation contested the apostolic authority of the Roman Catholic Church and offered alternative paths to divine truth and salvation. While church authority faltered, secular rulers asserted their divine right to rule without restraint as absolute monarchs, answerable to no human being but to God alone. Both religious authority and absolutist assertions of power were weakened during the Age of Reason, an era that opened with new, bold scientific and philosophical challenges to long-accepted tradition and authority.

Human reason, coupled with empirical observation, produced a definitive and accurate vision of the cosmos that stood in contradiction to that of Aristotle, Ptolemy, and other authorities whose views had received unquestioned support from Christian leaders through the

centuries. Enlightenment thinkers championed human reason as the means of perceiving and implementing truths without the need for religious or secular power. Their message, increasingly appealing to the emerging gentry and urban middle class, was disseminated globally through authoritative scholarly publications and by means of art and music. In the next chapter, on the Age of Revolutions, we will review how the empowerment of the gentry and urban middle class reorganized power and authority along new lines—politically, religiously, and socially.

CHAPTER 10

Age of Revolutions

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way.
>
> —Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

Introduction

In this chapter we will address what British historian Eric Hobsbawm called the "dual revolutions" of Europe: the French Revolution and the British Industrial Revolution. Although they are treated as separate phenomena, they were interconnected in several respects: the urban challenges experienced in Britain were very similar—perhaps almost identical in some respects—to those in France, and the political upheavals in France had their parallels in Britain. Whereas France, however, ultimately approached its political dissatisfaction through violence aimed at producing republican representative government, the British, having already had their Glorious Revolution in the seventeenth century, essentially legislated their way out of extreme violence, gradually developing a stable and enduring republican constitutional monarchy. But both political revolution and industrial revolution involved deep social reorganization, and both revolutions produced sociopolitical challenges still evident in the West today. Only by studying these revolutions may we identify these ongoing challenges and address them responsibly.

Political Revolution in Europe

The French Revolution (1789–1815) should be seen as the first in a series of continental political uprisings that occurred off and on between 1789 and 1914. The French Revolution ended with what is called the "post-Napoleonic settlement," formalized among the major nations of Europe at the 1815 Congress of Vienna. Over the next few decades monarchical and conservative interests reasserted political control over the continent of Europe, largely under the leadership of Austria and Prince Metternich (1773–1859). There were, however, periods of revolution and political crisis in Europe that continued well beyond the post-Napoleonic settlement of 1815, continuing throughout the nineteenth century.

The July Monarchy (1830)

A revolution in France in 1830 produced the July Monarchy, removing Charles X from the restored throne of France and giving the crown to Louis-Philippe, Duke of Orléans, based upon popular sovereignty, ending the hereditary right to the crown of France. The effects of the Revolution of 1830 extended beyond the formal borders of France, resulting in the creation of an independent Belgium, which was separated from the Netherlands, for example.

The Springtime of Peoples (1848)

A series of revolutions across much of Europe in 1848 resulted in the establishment of republican governments across much of the continent. Most of these governments lasted only a short time, some only for a few days, before reactionary forces reasserted control. In France, however, the revolutions of 1848 created the Second Republic of France, led by Louis-Napoleon, the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. Louis Napoleon was popularly elected President of the Second Republic of France. In 1852, Louis-Napoleon led a coup ending the Second Republic and creating the Second Empire of France. Like his more famous uncle, Louis made himself emperor: Napoleon III. The Second Empire, representing a triumph of reactionary forces, lasted until the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, in which Louis-Napoleon (Emperor Napoleon III) was captured.

The Paris Commune (1871)

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 ended in unequivocal military and diplomatic disaster for France, and Paris was reduced to starvation under a lengthy Prussian siege. During the Prussian siege of Paris, a revolutionary municipal government, known as the Paris Commune, took control of much of the city from March 18 through May 28, 1871. Although the commune lasted only a few months, it served as a lasting example of Marxism-in-action for European supporters of Karl Marx on the one hand, and an example of the depravations and atrocities possible under a "dictatorship of the proletariat" to those persons opposed to Marxism.

Beginning with the French Revolution in 1879, the entire period until 1918 may be viewed as a single macro-event, a series of revolutions and counterrevolutions. The French Revolution became a model for other nations seeking to create representative governments across Europe and beyond. The French Revolution produced what is arguably the most influential document defining modern human and civil rights: The Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen. Accordingly, in the areas of government and of law, the revolution sought to implement Enlightenment political and humanist ideals. Historians widely regard it as a major turning point in the history not only of Western civilization, but of world civilization as well.

The French Revolution (1789–1815)

We are going to study the French Revolution by examining its origins, its causes, its history, and its legacy. The revolution lasted from 1789 to 1815. There are at least four main phases of the French Revolution:

- *Phase One* (1789–1791): Convening of the *Estates-General*
- *Phase Two* (1791–1795): The National Assembly and the Reign of Terror
- *Phase Three* (1795–1799): The Directory
- *Phase Four* (1799–1815): The Napoleonic Era and the Congress of Vienna

The history of the revolution is complex and has been the subject of intense debate not only among historians, but also among its then-contemporary supporters and detractors, and among leaders of nations and states ever since. In this chapter, we will have space only to

identify its origins, trace its history, highlight its key events, and present key aspects of its effect and its heritage. The reader is encouraged to pursue additional study, using this section as a guide.

Origins of the French Revolution

The French Revolution arguably began as an attempt to establish a just society through the application of Enlightenment concepts and ideals. This attempt frequently departed from Enlightenment values—often in violent ways, as evidenced by the events of the Great Fear (1789) and the Reign of Terror (1793–1794). Supporters of revolution in France (and elsewhere, including the Americas) sought to effect a profound and lasting transformation in what they saw as a deeply unjust society. But they themselves were often shocked at the violent course revolution took and the unjust methods employed in the name of establishing justice. Nevertheless, they mostly regarded the revolution as a time of hope, a time in which commoners would at last take their rightful place in French society and politics and fully realize the individual expression promised in the values of the Enlightenment. Those who opposed the revolution, principally the noble aristocracy (but not all members of this class, for it included its own supporters of revolution, such as the Marquis de Lafayette), saw it as a struggle between the forces of order, represented by the entrenched aristocratic clergy and nobility, and the forces of chaos, represented by the revolutionaries. British author Charles Dickens masterfully summed up these opposing viewpoints in a single sentence: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

The political realities of continental Europe in the eighteenth century stood, in many respects, in direct opposition to the fundamental values of the Enlightenment (see chapter 7). You may recall that John Locke advocated in his *Second Treatise on Government* that humans were each born with natural rights concerning their life, their liberty, and their property. Readers familiar with the theoretical underpinnings of the American Revolution (1775–1789) will recognize that the revolutionary Thomas Jefferson, another committed Enlightenment thinker, restated many of Locke's core political concepts in the American Declaration of Independence. By these means, the ideas of Locke and other Enlightenment thinkers were incorporated into—and were used to justify—revolution. For example, Jefferson wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Like Locke, Jefferson believed that the very purpose of government was to make safe these natural rights, and "that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Finally, Jefferson proclaimed that when the political reality of a society and of a state failed to preserve these natural rights, but in fact undermined or destroyed them, the people had the right to revolt and create a new government: "That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government." But Jefferson also tied the *right* to revolt to the *responsibility* to restore just government, "laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

The Philosophes

The *philosophes* of France (see chapter 7), people who thought much like Locke and Jefferson, understood all too well that the political reality in France failed to protect and advance natural rights for men in general and that women were politically excluded as a group. The majority of persons in France—perhaps 90 percent of the population—had no political voice whatsoever. They were, in many respects, hardly more than slaves, toiling away their lives in fear of starvation and subject to exploitation. Many *philosophes* argued that the time had come for change—and if change could not happen peacefully, then, some argued, the time had come for revolution. Such was the attitude of many of those persons whom Americans commonly call the Founding Fathers, a group of Enlightenment-influenced statesmen willing to adopt violent means for the overthrow of what they perceived to be an oppressive government. Jefferson, again, sums up their feelings in the Declaration of Independence: "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security." In other words, the time may come when the abuses of the government are so severe, when neither life, liberty, nor property are secure, that the people, the true sovereign power according to Locke's theories of government, have an affirmative duty to overthrow the government by violent means. Numerous *philosophes* and other progressive thinkers in France took this principle seriously, arguing that the political situation was so bad that it called for reform, perhaps even revolution. They sought to correct many abuses and sought both social and political reform—and were willing to rebel in order to do so. These *philosophes*, often members of the growing bourgeois class of urban merchants and professionals, constituted a core of natural revolutionaries, prepared to lead the way in forming a new government.

Origins of French Sociopolitical Organization

On the eve of the revolution, French society was *legally* organized essentially the same way it had been since the establishment of Christendom (see chapters 4 and 5). There were three legally recognized classes of French society, derived from the early classifications of *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*. The French word for each of these legally defined social groups is *état*, or "estate." The three estates were: first, the clergy (*oratores*); second, the nobility (*bellatores*); and third, the workers (*laboratores*), or everyone else. They were collectively referred to in France as the *États Generales* ("Estates General" in English). The three estates made sense in a time when there was very little trade.

But when trade picked up beginning in the High Middle Ages, a new classification of people arose over the course of several centuries, based largely upon their increased wealth and *not* upon their traditional role as *oratores*, *bellatores*, or *laboratores*. This emerging group included businessmen (*commerçants*). Additionally, university-trained professionals, such as lawyers, enjoyed increased wealth and social status. Nevertheless, members of these groups were overwhelmingly members of the Third Estate and had no political status as individuals. Many important revolutionary leaders were members of these groups and part of the Third Estate. The nineteenth-century German political philosopher Karl Marx called this group the bourgeoisie, meaning an urban middle class comprised mainly of merchants and professionals. The bourgeoisie paid a great deal of taxes, but had no representation in the government of France. They were educated and experienced, and they increasingly—and in vain—sought participation in politics and government. Even some members of the nobility, such as the Marquis de

Lafayette, and some members of the clergy, most notably local parish priests who saw firsthand the suffering of the people, agitated for greater political power for the Third Estate—which increasingly came to mean the bourgeoisie.

The Political Status Quo Ante

The aristocracy—that is, the crown and the nobility—governed the political system of France. Power was concentrated into their hands, and with power came privilege. For instance, the nobility and clergy were "privileged" in that they were largely exempt from many, if not all, taxes under the outdated Estates system. Thus, the burden of keeping the French state financially afloat fell almost entirely to the common people, or *laboratores*, meaning not only the peasantry and urban workers, but the bourgeoisie as well. Inspired by the Enlightenment ideals of natural rights, and to protect their property, the bourgeoisie came to believe that they had to eliminate the Estates system, which protected only the clergy and nobility. This they would do by creating a new "social contract" that would protect natural liberties. You may recall that Locke concluded that a popular legislature was the key political institution that guaranteed natural rights. The bourgeoisie thus sought not only the elimination of Estates' privileges, but the establishment of a republic with popular representation in an elected legislature (consisting mostly of themselves).

Unfortunately—from a bourgeois perspective—as long as the government of France did not require the full support or cooperation of the bourgeoisie, there was little chance that the membership of the first two estates would agree to deep political change. Furthermore, as long as the bourgeoisie were scattered and disunited, there was little chance that a revolution would take place. The French revolutionaries did not have the political and practical luxuries that Americans had had in the 1770s—such as an expansive ocean that separated them from the British king and gave them greater liberty to develop democratic ideas and institutions, together with a complete absence of any entrenched noble class. A revolution by the colonies in America would not appreciably diminish the power of the British king, nor would it result in a deep reorganization of British society, nor would it threaten to end the power of the nobility in England. In contrast to the situation in the American colonies, the French king was close at hand, maintained a large professional army, and had great determination to maintain his power at nearly all costs. Any revolution in France would likely restrict royal power under a constitution and threaten the power and existence of the French nobility. Nevertheless, by the late 1780s, the French king, Louis XVI, at last required the help of members of the emerging bourgeoisie to solve serious problems faced by France. To put them to use, he had to allow them to unite in new and powerful ways—particularly by recognizing their political legitimacy as part of the Estates General. This new unity, combined with a series of events and forces that had taken place and developed over the previous few decades, eventually came together seeking expanded participation in government.

Causes of the French Revolution

Historians have long been fascinated with the question of the causes of the French Revolution. As we examine the causes of the revolution, we will label them as either remote or direct. A *remote* cause refers to an event (or series of events) that "set the stage" for a revolution

in the long term. A *direct* cause means that an event was an immediate instigator of revolutionary action. If we use the metaphor of a bonfire for the outbreak of the French Revolution, then the remote causes were like the tinder and dry wood stacked into a large pile, ready to burn. This metaphorical wood of remote causes had been drying in the hot sun of France for many generations and was quite ready to burn. The direct causes symbolize the matches that would light the tinder and begin the conflagration.

Remote Cause: General Dissatisfaction

The pressure for social change in France had been building for centuries. In the last half of the eighteenth century, the pressures intensified and multiplied. The discontent associated with these mounting pressures was one of the remote causes of the revolution. The growing popularity of Enlightenment values—such as social justice, natural rights, and the fundamental equality of man—defined and shaped the contours of this dissatisfaction and led to unheeded calls for specific reforms.

Remote Cause: Taxation

As mentioned earlier, the burden of taxes fell on the members of the Third Estate, the "laborers." Members of the First Estate, the clergy, and the Second Estate, the nobility, were exempt from most, and in some cases all, taxes. Many taxes had been implemented in the Middle Ages and arguably made sense for those times. Other taxes were of more recent origin. Perhaps the *gabelle*—a tax on salt—was the most hated. In today's world, one might think a tax on salt to be superfluous, even silly. But think about the vital role salt plays in sustaining human life. Salt is necessary to maintain electrolyte balance, a fundamental aspect of health, but sufficient salt is not always available through diet alone. People—especially peasants and hard laborers—frequently need additional salt to maintain health. To tax salt was to tax a genuine health necessity. The monarchy of France held a monopoly on salt sales and was able to effectively tax salt. For a wealthy person, a tax on salt would hardly amount to a fraction of a fraction of his or her income, but to a peasant a tax on salt could be onerous. Furthermore, the government allowed "tax-farmers" to collect the tax. Tax-farmers were private persons who had government authority to collect a tax upon prepayment of a portion of the tax by the "farmer." Poorer people commonly despised these tax-farmers because they extracted the tax with little regard for a poor person's miserable state and apparently profited from this misery.

Other taxes included:

- *Taille*: a direct tax on land or individuals
- *Vingtième*: a property tax of 5 percent paid to the state
- *Capitation*: a tax on the number of persons in a family
- *Corvée*: a tax in the form of labor to help maintain roads or bridges or other public works
- *Banalitées*: taxes on the use of a flour mill—often owned by a nobleman—to grind wheat into flour, taxes to use a nobleman's bakery, or taxes for the use of other unique and expensive equipment that peasants could not afford for themselves
- Local or provincial imposts and duties, some imposed by the nobility on their peasants

The collection of taxes was a common, perhaps even daily, affair for many French citizens. Claims of abuse were commonplace and worked to erode trust in the government and the nobility. Besides being comparatively oppressive for the Third Estate, the taxation system was very difficult for the government to manage and was an inefficient method for collecting revenue.

Remote Cause: Widespread Malnutrition and Localized Starvation

France experienced significant food shortages and malnutrition in the decades prior to the revolution. With the second-largest population of continental Europe—about twenty-eight million inhabitants—France was also the most urbanized nation of continental Europe. Urban centers increasingly depended upon the efficient transportation of more and more food from the countryside, but the existing network of country roads was not sufficient to keep the food supply coming from distant areas of production. Urban malnutrition and occasional starvation became more and more frequent.

The situation grew worse five years prior to the revolution when a serious natural disaster struck. On June 8, 1783, Iceland's Mt. Laki, a complex of over one hundred volcanic fissures, erupted. Over the next eight months, it spewed out nearly fourteen cubic kilometers of lava and released about 120 million tons of poisonous sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere. Sulfur dioxide, as the reader may know, produces acid rain. The estimated discharge of the Laki eruption was equivalent to three times the total sulfur dioxide produced by all of the factories in all of Europe in the year 2006. In Iceland, nearly 50 percent of livestock died, and about 25 percent of the population died as well, mostly due to famine. The effects of the eruption were felt all over Europe. By June 20, 1783, a poisonous fog had settled over Paris. Estimates indicate that some tens of thousands of people in France died from these lethal gases. Many more died in other parts of Europe. Gilbert White, who lived in Selbourne, England, recorded the effects of the eruption there in these terms:

> All the time the heat was so intense that butchers' meat could hardly be eaten on the day after it was killed; and the flies swarmed so in the lanes and hedges that they rendered the horses half frantic, and riding irksome. The country people began to look with a superstitious awe, at the red, louring [sic] aspect of the sun … (Williams, 119).

Additional weather problems that year included a very hot summer, which resulted in poor crop yields. Then an early frost destroyed more of the year's crops before they could be harvested. And as if nature itself were in conspiracy against humankind in Western Europe, the winter of 1783–84 was unusually cold. In 1788—the summer before the revolution—there was a devastating hailstorm that may have been linked to the precipitation of volcanic particles in the upper atmosphere produced by the eruption. France fell into widespread famine, and following a sharp decline in supply of flour and wheat, the price of bread soared well beyond the reach of the common person. The concentration of large numbers of underfed people in the growing cities of France was a significant remote cause of the coming revolution.

Direct Cause: Fiscal Crisis

In addition to these remote causes, an explosive financial crisis was poised and ready to burst into flame. Recall the extravagances of Louis XIV in the building and operation of Versailles (chapter 7). Indeed, court operations were a profound drain on the national budget. In addition to the expenses associated with pomp and extravagance, the numerous wars Louis XIV's France engaged in—particularly the War of the Spanish Succession—placed a steady and significant strain upon the national budget.

His successor, King Louis XV, who ruled France from 1715 to 1774, was even more financially reckless. His extravagances, combined with a more visibly libertine lifestyle, made him increasingly unpopular. And *another* series of wars under Louis XV further drained the treasury. The most expensive and devastating defeat for Louis XV came in the Seven Years' War, which lasted from 1756 to 1763. Although most of Europe's major powers, such as Prussia and Austria, took part in the war, it essentially devolved into a battle between France and Britain for control over several colonial areas and trade zones located around the world. Most Americans know the North American theater of the Seven Years' War as the French and Indian War. By the time the conflict was over, France had lost many, if not all, of its imperial possessions in India, Canada, the West Indies, and Africa.

Even worse from the French perspective, Prussia, the precursor of the German Empire, successfully used the war to further establish itself as a continental great power under the leadership of King Frederick the Great (1712–1774) while France's relative power declined. In reaction, the next French king, Louis XVI (1774–1793), decided as early as 1774 to assist the American colonies in their revolt against Great Britain. The eventual defeat of the British by revolutionary forces in the American colonies was a moral victory for the French and the revenge was satisfying, but French aid to America proved very expensive and helped take France much closer to the brink of bankruptcy.

Recognizing the serious financial problems facing France, Louis XVI appointed a series of finance ministers and controllers—beginning in 1774—each of whom attempted to streamline the tax system and distribute the tax burden more equitably across all of France's population. Each attempt met with failure, due in large measure to the opposition of the noble aristocracy, whose privileges and tax exemptions came under increasing criticism. Faced with bankruptcy, Louis XVI did something that had not been done since 1614—he convened the one legal assembly in France that could give him the power to establish new taxes: the Estates General. The convocation of the Estates General gave the *philosophes* and the bourgeois class the political opportunity they desired in order to effect the deep social and political transformations they had advocated for decades.

Convening the Estates General

The Estates General was composed of representatives of all three estates: the clergy (*oratores*, or First Estate), the nobility (*bellatores*, or Second Estate), and everyone else (*laboratores*, or Third Estate). The first two estates—when combined—represented less than 3 percent of France, whereas the Third Estate represented 97 percent of the total population. The voting system was very simple—perhaps overly simple: each Estate had one vote. It was obvious that under this system, the outcome of the voting in the Estates General would always favor the aristocracy and the church. Hundreds of representatives of the three Estates would convene,

debate, cajole, and argue, but in the end, the First and Second Estates would predictably vote together in order to preserve their privileges and tax exemptions.

Faced with this possibility, the *philosophes* and the leaders among bourgeois society decided to make a power play. They published a series of pamphlets—notably one entitled "*What Is the Third Estate?"*—calling for a doubling of the representation of the Third Estate. This would make the number of representatives in the Third Estate roughly equal to the other two combined. The pamphlet argued that if Louis were to prevail and new taxes were instituted that nobles would be required to pay, then the king would have to rely on the Third Estate for help. Louis XVI agreed, doubling the representation of the Third Estate: the clergy would have three hundred representatives with one collective vote, the nobility would have three hundred representatives with one collective vote, and the commoners would have six hundred representatives but still with only one collective vote.

Grassroots Participation

The comparative size of the Third Estate's representation was significant, but the way in which the Third Estate selected its representation proved equally significant in the end. The selection of representatives to the Third Estate was essentially democratic, and for the first time, commoners in France participated directly in a national political process. Beginning in small districts and villages, members of the Third Estate gathered during March and April of 1789 to debate the issues of unfair taxation and widespread feelings of discontent toward the nobility and the clergy. Their grievances were recorded in *cahiers de doléances*, or "notebooks of grievances." Curiously, it was Louis himself who ordered that the *cahiers* be prepared in order to convince the commoners that the king himself would learn of their complaints directly. They are an invaluable historical source detailing the workings of eighteenth-century democracy. The *cahiers* of the Third Estate functioned as a voice for the common people, their first attempt at democratic expression. Local conventions also elected representatives to the next higher level of convocation and representative election. Thus, leaders among the bourgeois class made their way into the final group of representatives sent to Versailles. Of the nearly six hundred representatives for the Third Estate most were lawyers, physicians, merchants, with some agriculturists, evidencing the presences of a strong professional and commercial bourgeois influence. Each of these representatives also represented a geographic constituency and was elected to represent the interests of that constituency, one of the foundational principles of republican representative government.

Voting at the Estates General

The Estates General convened at Versailles on May 5, 1789. The usual pomp and circumstance associated with the crown, the clergy, and the nobility was on display, and perhaps more attention was placed by these two estates on procedure and precedent than on resolving the deep fiscal problems plaguing the nation. The Third Estate was highly organized and within itself was free from concerns over protocol. It had come to play political hardball. The Third Estate quickly called for a restructuring of the overall voting system so that there would be one vote per delegate, instead of one vote per Estate. The first two Estates opposed such a voting

system since it would make the Third Estate at least as powerful as the other two combined. The king initially gave in to this resistance and maintained one vote per Estate. The Estates General made little progress, and Louis was eventually forced to change his mind due to his inability to solve the deepening debt crisis, but by then it was too late.

The Third Estate stepped in and took control of the convention. This move constituted a coup d'état as a prelude to outright revolution. The Third Estate formed a new and independent assembly, calling itself the *Communes*, and invited members of the other Estates to join together in this new—and unauthorized!—combined assembly. Most delegates in the first two Estates would not join. Nevertheless, a number of sympathizers among the clergy, notably parish priests who worked among the common people, and certain nobles who sympathized with Enlightenment ideas concerning natural rights and popular sovereignty, joined the ranks of the *Communes*. The body grew, and on June 17 reformed itself as the National Constituent Assembly, declaring that it rightly represented all people of France, not just the traditional and narrow interests of the privileged medieval Estates.

Events now moved beyond the control of the king or of the other Estates. Joined by a large contingent from the clergy, the National Constituent Assembly met in an indoor tennis court and took the famous Tennis Court Oath on June 20, swearing to not disband until they had drafted a written constitution for France. This is when the coup became a revolution. Louis responded by locking them out of the tennis court a few days later, but the assembly moved to the Church of Saint Louis and continued its constitutional deliberations. On August 26, 1789, the National Constituent Assembly approved and adopted one of the most remarkable documents in the political history of the modern world, the *Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen*.

Civil and Human Rights Recognized

The *Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen* was clearly the product of Enlightenment philosophy and political theory, grounded in the social contract theories of John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and others (see chapter 7). It adopted principles of the US Declaration of Independence, principally authored by Thomas Jefferson—who was at that same time serving as a US diplomat to France. It embodied the concept of natural rights, including life, liberty, and property, adding that humans also had a natural right to be free from oppression. The Enlightenment origins of the Declaration's principles can be clearly seen in its provisions (as reported by Thomas Paine, (59-60):

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.
2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.
3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority that does not proceed directly from the nation.
4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything that injures no one else; hence, the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those that assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law.

5. Law can only prohibit such actions as are hurtful to society. Nothing may be prevented that is not forbidden by law, and no one may be forced to do anything not provided for by law.
6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its foundation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all offices and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents.
7. No person shall be accused, arrested, or imprisoned except in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law. Anyone soliciting, transmitting, executing, or causing to be executed any arbitrary order shall be punished. But any citizen summoned or arrested in virtue of the law shall submit without delay, as resistance constitutes an offense.
8. The law shall only provide for such punishments as are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one shall suffer punishment except it be legally inflicted by virtue of a law passed and promulgated before the commission of the offense.
9. As all persons are held innocent until they shall have been declared guilty, if arrest shall be deemed indispensable, all harshness not essential to the securing of the prisoner's person shall be severely repressed by law.
10. No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law.
11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law.
12. The security of the rights of man and of the citizen requires public military forces. These forces are, therefore, established for the good of all and not for the personal advantage of those to whom they shall be entrusted.
13. A general tax is indispensable for the maintenance of the public force and for the expenses of administration; it ought to be equally apportioned among all citizens according to their means.
14. All the citizens have a right to decide, either personally or by their representatives, as to the necessity of the public contribution; to grant this freely; to know to what uses it is put; and to fix the proportion, the mode of assessment and of collection, and the duration of the taxes.
15. Society has the right to require of every public agent an account of his administration.
16. A society in which the observance of the law is not assured, nor the separation of powers defined, has no constitution at all.
17. Property being an inviolable and sacred right, no one can be deprived of it, unless it is so required by public necessity and an authority legally constituted explicitly demands it under the condition of a just and prior indemnity.

Summary of the Origins of the Revolution

The remote and direct causes of the revolution thus combined to create the conditions necessary for a genuine bourgeois coup d'état. The words of the pamphlet "What Is the Third Estate?" succinctly summed up the goals of the *philosophes*, the bourgeois professionals, and the merchants, in three questions, each with a one-word answer:

What is the Third Estate? Everything.
What has it been until now in the political order? Nothing.
What does it want to be? Something.

The National Constituent Assembly was now "something" indeed: an elected political body that claimed to speak for all of France and sought to create a constitution. In response, Louis called units of the army to Versailles—an ominous portent of the violence that was soon to come.

The Revolution Turns Violent

For the next five years, France faced a series of violent internal conflicts and, finally, serious external attacks from other European powers. As the violence and warfare progressed, the politics of France increasingly radicalized. What was at first a middle class—or bourgeois—revolution for changes in political representation and a call for fair taxation turned into a class war, in which mobs exacted revenge upon nobility, clergy, and eventually the crown. This internal conflict then entered an international phase.

Louis's summons to the army alarmed the citizens of Paris, who feared that he was about to crush the National Constituent Assembly with raw military force. They began to riot and rally support for the Assembly. Louis, in turn, called more troops in from the countryside to attempt to calm the situation, but most of these troops were foreigners serving under French command. There was only one combat unit comprised of French nationals, the *Gardes Françaises*, the French Guard. Drawn from the commoners of France, the members of the French Guard understood what was at stake and threw in their lot with the Parisians. They were prepared to go to war, but needed munitions if they were to defend both Paris and the nearby National Constituent Assembly at Versailles for any serious length of time.

Storming of the Bastille

On July 14, 1789, the French Guard and angry citizens stormed the fortress prison called the *Bastille* in order to secure its large cache of weapons and ammunition. But once in action, the pent-up anger and frustration accumulated over decades was released in a few hours' time. The *Bastille* was not only a fortress, but also a prison in which enemies of the crown—political prisoners—were detained. The prison was a symbol of repression, power, and privilege, a natural target for mass anger. The fortress was stormed and the munitions secured in a matter of hours. Cooler heads then called for a cease-fire to prevent an all-out massacre, but the bulk of what was now basically a mob was beyond restraint. They seized the prison governor, beat and stabbed him repeatedly, and eventually cut off his head—which was paraded through the streets on the end of a pike. The mob then made its way to City Hall and captured the mayor, who was killed en route to what was supposed to have been his trial. The murder of the prison governor and of the mayor was hardly a vindication in action of the principles of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*.

March of the Women of Paris

On October 1, 1789, a crowd of Parisian women, believing that the king was about to

dissolve the National Constituent Assembly, began a march toward Versailles to foil what they believed was a royal counterrevolutionary plot. Ongoing bread shortages and general discontent fed their anger. Along the way, they gathered weapons, including a few pieces of small artillery, and descended on the palace, killing a few of the guards. The Marquis de Lafayette, who served in the American colonies with Washington, persuaded the king to stand down. The women demanded that the royal family, including Louis himself and his queen, Marie Antoinette, move into Paris itself, where they could be better observed and controlled. Nobles thereafter began to flee the capital in increasing numbers, some relocating to the countryside to wait out the violence and others going abroad to plan revenge in conjunction with the leaders of foreign powers and their armies. The countryside was plagued by roaming bands of brigands, often comprised of starving people without home or employment. This was the period called the Great Fear.

Louis found himself without much support, at home or abroad. He could not now trust his own citizens, nor could he trust the other monarchs of Europe, many of whom wanted to claim the throne of France for themselves. Nevertheless, on June 20, 1790, he decided to make a run for the border. Dressed as servants, the royal family managed to escape Paris, but were captured the next day and returned to Paris under guard. The Assembly suspended the monarchy—effectively removing the king from office. It enacted in the next year what is known as the Constitution of 1791. Louis XVI eventually and reluctantly agreed to "serve" as the French king, subject to constitutional limits.

Royal absolutism in France was now considered dead, and the goals of the National Constituent Assembly had been effectively accomplished. A new body was elected under the Constitution of 1791, called the Legislative Assembly (October 1791 to August 1792). Political fragmentation within the Legislative Assembly led to its dissolution, however, and a new and more radical body, called the National Convention (1792–1795), took control. The revolution had taken a more radical turn, and the moderate bourgeois leadership that had begun the revolution was by this time largely out of power, having been replaced by a more radical element called the Jacobins.

The Jacobins

Americans, prior to their own revolution in 1775, had experienced some self-government by means of town hall meetings and colonial legislatures. The French had not. They had had no widespread experience with democracy or with maintaining order or peaceful society by means of self-government. The next few years, unsurprisingly, saw a series of assemblies and congresses, each more radical than its predecessor. This period of disorder eventually culminated in an era of sustained and systematic violence called the Reign of Terror.

Throughout the early years of the revolution, a more radical political element coalesced as newly founded local political clubs spread across France, called Jacobin Clubs. At the height of their influence in 1793–94, there were thousands of Jacobin Clubs scattered across France, with nearly half a million members. The Jacobins were dedicated to keeping the revolution alive and making certain it moved beyond merely including the bourgeoisie in politics and making taxation fairer. Jacobin delegates were elected to the Legislative Assembly in large numbers.

Execution of the King and Queen

By 1792, however, this assembly appeared unable to secure order at home or to

successfully fight against the armies of Austria and Prussia, who were on the point of invading France. These internal and external threats resulted in yet another restructuring of the government and the election of a new assembly called the Convention. Under firm Jacobin control, the Convention took advantage of its power to end the reign of Louis XVI. Accused of conspiring with the enemies of France to aid an invasion, Louis was convicted of treason by the Convention by a narrow majority. He was executed by guillotine four days later, on January 21, 1793, in what is now the *Place de la Concorde*, in Paris. Louis's wife, Queen Marie Antoinette, an Austrian princess, was deeply hated by many among the French people. According to tradition, she was told in 1789 that the people of Paris had no bread and were starving. According to the story, she famously said, "If they have no bread, then let them eat *cake*." It should come as no surprise that once in the hands of the people she was also beheaded, nearly almost nine months after Louis, on October 16, 1793.

The executions of Louis and Marie Antoinette prompted the monarchs of Europe to action. They would not stand idly by while the commoners of a nation took control and executed monarchs. Although they may have been opponents of Louis in a larger diplomatic sense, they saw his execution as a potential death sentence on them all. They did not want their own subjects getting the idea that they could throw off monarchies and establish democracies. In addition, Austrian honor demanded revenge for Marie Antoinette's death. Powers that otherwise might not have joined forces therefore united in the determination to end the French Republic and put a monarch back on the throne. The wars that followed lasted until 1815. Millions of people perished.

The Reign of Terror

The Convention took its own steps to protect the republic and the revolution—from the Jacobin perspective, that is. Led by Jacobin deputies, the Convention formed the *Committee for Public Safety* and placed Maximilien Robespierre, called "the incorruptible," at its head. Fear of enemies outside of France soon took a backseat to fear of enemies inside of France, meaning the nobility. Those of you who have read the book or seen the movie *The Scarlet Pimpernel* know something of the nobility's view of the Reign of Terror, but from the general perspective of the commoner, the nobility was the enemy and had been for decades. "Terror is the order of the day," the Committee proclaimed, and formed a secret police and an army of informants. Anyone who expressed a sentiment that could be interpreted as anti-Jacobin or anti-revolution might face imprisonment or the guillotine as an enemy of the state. Fear spread throughout France as the Reign of Terror executed one enemy of the state after another. Some historians estimate the number of executed people at twenty thousand, and another forty thousand persons are thought to have died in prison while awaiting trial and execution. If the Enlightenment sought government on the basis of reason and natural liberty, surely the Reign of Terror was its opposite. What had started as a revolution to establish fair taxation and constitutional representation had degenerated into what increasingly appeared to be little more than a bloody free-for-all grounded in class warfare.

The irrational violence of the terror eventually burned itself out. Less-radical members of the Convention, called Girondists, eventually reasserted control, arrested Robespierre and his lieutenant Louis de Saint Just, and had them executed in 1794. The guillotine had now turned upon its users. Jacobin Clubs were disbanded. The moderate Girondists called for a new constitution, headed by an executive committee called the Directory.

Meanwhile, British, Austrian, and Prussian forces invaded France. The Directory was relatively helpless to organize effective resistance, and opportunistic officers now had the opportunity to seize control. Chief among them was Napoleon Bonaparte—who had been recently promoted to brigadier general for having forced the British to lift their siege at Toulon in 1794, a battle in which he was wounded. Although the Directory distrusted Bonaparte, it desperately needed him. In 1797 Bonaparte took command of an army and invaded Italy in order to take the war abroad and relieve international military pressures on France. Ultimately successful, Napoleon eventually forced Austria to sue for peace, and became a national hero in France.

The Age of Napoleon

In 1798, the Directory ordered Bonaparte to initiate a campaign in Egypt intended to weaken the British, while a navy was outfitted to combat the British on the high seas. More likely, the Directory feared Napoleon's growing popularity and power and wanted to keep him out of the way for a time. Predictably, Bonaparte successfully invaded Egypt—which was defended by the Ottoman Empire, and not by the British directly. The Ottomans were in no real position to resist Napoleon's overwhelming force and fell easily to his troops. Although not of military interest as such or crucial to Bonaparte's career, the expedition proved highly influential in modern history. The Rosetta Stone was uncovered, initiating the discipline called Egyptology. The rumor that Napoleon's artillery shot off the nose of the sphinx as target practice is—by the way—most certainly untrue: unsupported by stone underneath, the heavy nose probably fell off long before in one of the area's periodic earthquakes.

The British, however, did not leave Napoleon unmolested in Egypt, nor allow the French to construct all of their navy. British Admiral Horatio Nelson led the Nile Campaign (1798), in which all but two French ships were destroyed. Although in command of the Egyptian mainland, Napoleon posed no genuine threat to British interests in the Mediterranean area without a navy. Bonaparte eventually returned to France in 1799, while a French military contingent remained behind for three more years. He returned to Paris and helped overthrow the Directory in August 1799. A new constitution was promulgated, called the Constitution of Year VIII. Napoleon eventually became first consul, and then in 1804 he crowned himself Napoleon I, emperor of France.

The list of battles that Napoleon took part in is a long one, but three important campaigns must be mentioned:

• *Battle of Trafalgar (1805).* Napoleon knew that the French Navy could not defeat the British in a head-to-head confrontation, so he decided to lure the British away from France. The escape was foiled when the two navies met off the Iberian coast at Trafalgar. Admiral Horatio Nelson again showed his prowess by crippling the French navy, although it cost Nelson his life.

• *The Russian Campaign (1812).* After Trafalgar, Napoleon was confined to the continent, having no effective navy. Although he effectively controlled nearly two-thirds of Europe, Russia remained an elusive and dangerous enemy. Intending to invade Russia, Napoleon organized an army of nearly six hundred thousand troops, called the *Grande Armée*. But instead of moving against Russia in the early spring, he was delayed until June, a fact determined in part by the logistical challenges presented in arming, equipping, and organizing such a massive army in the early nineteenth century. By the time he reached Moscow, it was early fall. After one of

the bloodiest days of fighting in history (nearly eighty thousand died in all, with tens of thousands more either wounded or missing), the Russians abandoned Moscow to Napoleon, but initiated a scorched-earth policy. They burned their own fields, leaving the invading army without food. Napoleon marched the *Grande Armée* back through winter snows, losing hundreds of thousands of soldiers to death by starvation and exposure along the way. As many as 512,000 French soldiers died in this campaign as the result of poor leadership and a seriously delayed start.

• *Battle of Waterloo (1815).* Defeated by the Sixth Coalition of European powers in 1814, Napoleon was exiled to the island of Elba, in the Mediterranean. Although it was thought that he was finished, Napoleon plotted his return from exile. On March 20, 1815, Napoleon entered Paris with an army collected along the way from the coast. This final period of Napoleon's rule is called the Hundred Days. Forces led by the British Duke of Wellington and the Prussian Field Marshall von Blücher advanced toward France from the north, and Napoleon marched to meet them at Waterloo, located in modern Belgium. The British withstood multiple French attacks—long enough for the Prussians to arrive on the scene just in time to smash the French right. Napoleon was once again exiled, this time to the island of St. Helena in the Atlantic Ocean, where he died on May 5, 1821.

Napoleonic Reforms

While in power, Napoleon instituted a number of reforms that have had a deep impact across the world. His reforms include the following:

• 1801: The *Concordat,* partially restoring the Catholic Church to its former official status.

• 1802: Educational reforms, establishing the *lycée* system of secondary education still used in France, parts of Europe, and in many other parts of the world to this day for educating children to about the age of eighteen.

• 1804: The creation of the *Code Civil*, called the *Code Napoléon*, the most widely-used law code in modern times. Historians often refer to it as one of the few documents that have influenced the entire world. Napoleon wanted a legal code that was effective, yet so concise and simple that a farmer could take it to the field, and read and understand it while taking a break from plowing.

• 1804: Emancipation of the Jews, making them full French citizens.

Napoleon Bonaparte remains a controversial figure today. For some he was a champion of the French Revolution's core ideals: to create a government that secured *liberté*, *fraternité*, and *egalité* (liberty, brotherhood, and equality) for all citizens. To others, he was a power-hungry opportunist, one of the bloodiest commanders of all time, and a usurper who took advantage of a weak government to launch a personal career the likes of which the world had not seen since the days of Alexander the Great. The truth is likely a compromise between the two positions. Napoleon appeared at times to be a true champion of revolutionary ideals, and at other times a mere tyrant. No matter which he may have been—hero or tyrant—his profound influence upon the modern world is undeniable.

So ended the French Revolution, which enshrined ideals of human and civil rights in constitutions and legal codes of profound influence, born out of immense bloodshed and a fiery

political conflagration that still casts its revolutionary light across a troubled world.

The British Industrial Revolution

All too often, modern individuals fail to understand the profound and indispensable role that agricultural technology played in the emergence of civilization (see chapter 1). Attention is often given to large-scale endeavors, exciting military conquests, stirring political revolutions, and impressive advancements in medicine, science, and technology. Past peoples or ages often appear inferior because they were not as technologically advanced as one's own civilization. This perspective fails, however, to appreciate the necessary advancements of previous peoples and comprehend that without such advancements, the technology of one's own world would probably not even exist. A collective conceit may take hold in which the fundamental elements of past civilizations are ignored or fall into neglect, leading on occasion to the decline and fall of one's own civilization. Agricultural technology, although not as exciting as military conquest or political upheaval, plays a fundamental role in the stability of a civilization and is occasionally neglected at the peril of the civilization's continued existence. Innovations in agriculture—and their role in the story of civilization—deserve our attention, particularly in terms of how agricultural development is often a precursor to technological advancement.

The Industrial Revolution, like the Neolithic Revolution, was first and foremost an agricultural revolution. And just as there were indirect, or remote, causes of the political revolutions of America and France in the eighteenth century, so too were there remote causes of industrialization. Before the creation of the modern factory or assembly-line production methods using uniform parts—before trains, planes, or automobiles—there came the iron-tipped plow, the padded horse collar, the seed drill, and the four-field system of crop rotation. And as a result, there was a relatively steady numerical increase of a population that lived longer, was healthier, and required new or additional employment.

Agricultural Revolution of the Eighteenth Century

The British Agricultural Revolution was an indirect, or remote, cause of the Industrial Revolution. It was also a necessary cause, since without the food obtained from agricultural improvements to feed factory workers, there would have been no Industrial Revolution. The Agricultural Revolution was centered in Great Britain, but had connections to certain areas of the continent of Europe, such as Belgium and the Netherlands. The British Agricultural Revolution has two main phases. The first phase is often referred to as the enclosure movement. The second phase involved the mechanization of farming (the use of machines and equipment—eventually of powered equipment).

The enclosure movement began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, gathering steam—so to speak—in the eighteenth century. The English village of the fifteenth century was usually comprised of small dwellings, with nearby strips of land assigned to each family. These strips of land were part of larger "open fields." There was also a field reserved nearby for grazing livestock, held in common by the entire village, often called the *Village Commons*, or simply the *Commons*. In 1750 Parliament passed an *Enclosure Act* that fenced in, or enclosed, the open fields of the village, as well as the *Commons*. Families who lost access to the *Commons* and their strips of land among the open fields were paid for the loss, although the payment was not always sufficient to sustain them. Village lands held in common thus passed into private ownership. The

consequences of enclosure included improved efficiency in farming land in larger, cohesive plots, but at the expense of increased unemployment.

The 1750 Enclosure Act was followed by a series of enclosure acts extending to 1860, each bringing more British farmland under private ownership. More and more former farmers were looking for employment and left the village for the town or city, a process known as urbanization. Some even left Britain altogether—emigrating to distant lands in search of jobs. The trend of enclosure, with its consequent unemployment and resultant urbanization, provided a ready and willing labor force needed for emerging industry to succeed. As farms became increasingly efficient through new planting and harvesting techniques and through the increased adoption of powered machinery, the processes of urbanization and emigration intensified.

Let's take a brief look at some of the technologies used to improve farming throughout history:

- *Slash-and-Burn*. Anciently, farmers discovered that planting the same crop on the same land year after year depleted soil nutrients and led to ever-decreasing yields. This became apparent in the Neolithic agricultural revolution, when slash-and-burn agriculture was used (see chapter 1). A tribe would cut down trees, willow canes, and so on, and then burn the area. Seed was planted by charred trunks, where water would naturally collect and where the burned plants provided soil nutrients. After three or four years of plantings, the soil would deplete, and the tribe would slash-and-burn another area.
- *Field Rotation*. By the Bronze Age, farmers had learned to leave one field fallow (not planted) for a year for every field planted (see chapter 1). This meant that one-half of their land was not planted at any given time, but it also meant not having to move from place to place, as was required by slash-and-burn agricultural techniques. Inventions such as the wooden plow and yoke, most often used with oxen, allowed for deeper planting and access to nutrients locked in the depths of the soil. Yields improved, and the human population grew. Cities developed as unemployed people from the countryside learned specialized trades and moved into market centers.
- *The High Middle Ages*. Between about AD 1000 and 1300, three important inventions and techniques greatly improved crop yields, which led to increased population and urbanization (see chapter 5). This was a necessary agricultural precursor to the civilizational advances of the High Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the scientific revolution. These inventions and techniques were: (1) the iron-tipped plow, which allowed for deeper plowing; (2) the padded horse collar, which allowed for horses to pull harder without choking; and (3) the three-field system of crop rotation, which meant that only one-third of land was fallow at any given time, instead of one-half.
- *Eighteenth-Century Britain*. A four-field system of crop rotation was introduced during the British Agricultural Revolution, which followed the enclosure acts. Although the four-field system was already used in limited fashion in some regions of Europe, its widespread use in Britain was advocated and perfected by Charles Townshend (1674–1738). The system used four principal crops: wheat, turnips, barley, and clover. Townshend's particular order of rotation minimized fallow land, as crops such as clover restored essential nutrients like nitrogen. The four-field system also provided fodder for an increased number of grazing animals—thus also

providing much-needed organic fertilizer, which raised crop yields even further. The resultant population growth was unprecedented in European history.

- *Machine-Based Agriculture*. Jethro Tull (1674–1741) made numerous contributions to agriculture. He invented the "seed drill," which planted seeds uniformly in large fields, eventually replacing inefficient sowing. The seed drill not only made the distribution of seeds more even, but made the depth of the plantings uniform. The use of the seed drill was known to produce up to eight times more yield per acre when compared to traditional sowing by hand. Tull also made several changes to the plow still used today. He advocated the use of the horse over a team of oxen—which provided efficiencies in speed, among other things. His views on using the horse were printed in 1731 in his book *Horse-Houghing Husbandry*. Some of his inventions and ideas did not have an immediate impact, but over the next century, they became commonplace.

Population

Agricultural improvement exerted a direct effect upon population levels. Several times in Britain's history, the population had reached a plateau of about five and a half million. This happened about AD 1300, AD 1650, and AD 1750. In 1300 and in 1650, the population subsequently fell. This occurred largely because the factors that initially produced the population increase proved unsustainable (such as chance weather patterns, for example). Likewise, disease played a significant role, such as the Black Death of 1348, which claimed up to one-third of Britain's population. Finally, warfare also took its toll, such as the Hundred Years' War or the English Revolution of the seventeenth century. Wars not only claimed lives and took workers from their fields of labor, but were also very disruptive to agriculture and tended to destroy food supplies. Although war and disease continued after 1750, the dramatic changes in enclosure and in agricultural production techniques nevertheless allowed for sustained population growth.

First Industrial Revolution (1760–1860)

The key to sustainability in all areas, demographic and economic, was innovation, which gradually took agricultural and industrial methods of production into the deepest levels of society and the economy of the nation. Britain took the lead in the Industrial Revolution through mechanized production in four areas: agriculture; iron and steel manufacture; textiles, especially cotton mills; and transportation by rail and by boat. This period of clear British leadership is called the First Industrial Age, and it lasted from about 1760 to 1860. Increased population meant increased demand for not only food, but other products as well, such as clothing. This in turn called for improved manufactures using machinery to produce more goods per worker and to produce efficiencies in labor, lowering the relative cost per unit.

This should not suggest that machinery was entirely unknown to Britain. On the contrary, Britain and other Western European nations had been using machinery of one kind or another—borrowed from the ancients—for centuries. These machines included windmills, sawmills, and machinery that drew upon natural energy, such as wind or water. Such machinery was invariably located next to the source of energy, whether or not the local area could support a labor population or not. Such machines were often remote and lacked the roads, canals, or other means of efficient transportation for their product. But beginning at the end of the eighteenth century,

enterprising individuals invented new machines that could be used almost anywhere. Perhaps the most important invention in this regard was the steam engine.

The Steam Engine

In 1712 Thomas Newcomen (1664–1729) invented the first practical steam engine, which he called the atmospheric engine. It was a simple machine that used steam pressure to move a piston up and down. The piston, in turn, powered a lifting mechanism. Other gears and devices would transfer this simple motion into practical uses, such as pumping water out of mines. James Watt (1736–1819) perfected the engine considerably during the course of the eighteenth century, using, for example, the reciprocating motion of the piston on its reverse stroke for power, essentially doubling the amount of energy produced. Pulleys, belts, and other mechanisms were used to transfer the motion of the engine to new purposes beyond mining. This included powered looms for weaving, steam engines for ships, and even early steam automobiles. Manufacturing plants, called factories, could now be located in much more economically favorable places since the need to locate near water or other natural sources of power was no longer pressing. Using the steam engine, owners could now locate factories very close to natural resources, to an existing city where labor was cheap and plentiful, or to transportation networks such as canals or ports.

Steel Manufacturing

Steel production eventually replaced mere iron production and became one of the bedrock products of the Industrial Age. The new factories were being built to last, and in many cases that meant building with steel. Steel production was made inexpensive through the invention of the Bessemer furnace in 1855. Henry Bessemer (1813–1898) created a device, called the Bessemer converter, which efficiently removed impurities from molten pig iron through oxidation. Although steel had been produced long before the Bessemer converter was invented, the new device made large-scale production efficient and inexpensive.

Since coal and iron are the two main ingredients in making steel, it is not surprising that most steel factories in Britain were located near a large coal and iron network that stretched underground from Britain and went across the English Channel to Western Europe. Britain was gifted, as were parts of France and Germany, with supplies of iron and coal near the earth's surface. Steel and related factories were generally located near these coal and iron supplies. The location of steel mills near coal and iron sources made production less expensive, but also made transportation more difficult owing to their frequent location away from existing urban centers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, thousands of miles of canals were dug throughout Britain, improving communications considerably. It was, however, the application of yet another Industrial Age invention that really solved the problem: the steam locomotive.

The Steam Locomotive

In 1829, George Stephenson (1781–1848) laid a steam boiler on its side and attached the pistons to a drive mechanism for wheels placed on a metal track; the steam locomotive was invented. He named it *The Rocket*. *The Rocket* ran from Liverpool to Manchester—not much of a

distance, but much faster than using a stagecoach. So long as the use of rail travel was restricted to passengers and light loads, it did not have much of an impact on industry and was more a curiosity than a necessity. But by the mid-nineteenth century, large freight locomotives had been developed, along with heavy rail systems that could carry massive loads over very long distances efficiently and inexpensively. This meant that production facilities could be located at great distances from each other but close to raw materials, yet could transfer their products over great distances to urban markets.

This further improved efficiencies, and in the case of the United States, made westward expansion and industrial exploitation of widely dispersed natural resources possible. By 1869 the first transcontinental railroad in the United States was completed, and America could fully participate in expanding its own emerging industrial empire. Together with events unfolding in Europe, this began the Second Industrial Age.

Second Industrial Revolution (1860–1914)

Although Britain took the lead in the First Industrial Revolution, Germany and the United States took the lead in the Second Industrial Revolution. This period witnessed the establishment of the modern discipline of chemistry, which allowed for petroleum refining and eventually ushered in an age of world dependence upon oil—largely through the use of the internal combustion engine, which came to replace the steam engine over time. The mastery of electrical power and inventions such as the incandescent lightbulb made electricity another major power source of the Second Industrial Age. These new energy sources improved manufacturing efficiencies over steam power by several orders of magnitude. The Second Industrial Revolution included further improvements in agriculture, but also important, included improvements in food preservation and distribution, such as canning and refrigeration. Finally, the Second Industrial Revolution produced the first modern consumer markets for products such as automobiles and the telephone.

Rapid technological change produced marked social change, largely through massive urbanization and population displacements. This, in turn led to political agitation in the growing cities, the emergence of organized labor. Never before in western Europe had so many people been brought together in cities, and the challenges posed by the need to feed so many persons, to dispose of trash and human waste were often beyond the theoretical and managerial capabilities of political leaders and government bureaucrats. Professionals, intellectuals, and academics eventually responded by adapting their methods and studies to the social and political consequences of the Industrial Revolution, culminating in the birth of the social sciences.

Social and Political Consequences of the Industrial Revolution

The British Agricultural Revolution, as has been mentioned, led to increased urbanization as unemployed rural workers moved to cities in search of jobs. These new workers were often unskilled in anything but agriculture. They contrasted with the skilled labor traditionally found in towns and cities, namely artisans who often worked in connection with established guilds. The guild system produced skilled workers using the apprentice/journeyman/master system of training (see chapter 5). Over the course of about fifteen years, an artisan might become a master and have the right to open his or her own manufacturing shop. In the case of skilled artisans—as

well as the farmers that remained in the countryside—there was a direct relationship between labor and ownership of manufacturing.

The unskilled, or under-skilled, urban newcomers found themselves competing for too few jobs. Furthermore, they frequently became merely a labor resource for factory owners and managers, not members of a manufacturing team (as was the customary case within guilds). In these regards, they were quite unlike the guildsmen or the emerging rural gentry. They experienced what would later be labeled *alienation*, a disconnection between their life and their work. Alienation in certain respects negated the perceived dignity and value that Christian society once saw in work, transforming the worker into more of a depersonalized commodity, a metaphorical cog in the wheel of an even larger social machine. If the alienation of labor from ownership produced a sense of dehumanization among workers and the unemployed, then living conditions in industrial cities intensified it.

Living Conditions in Industrial Britain

The impact of industrialization upon the family was profound, particularly in the case of women—who were direct partner-participants in agriculture prior to enclosure. Women often worked in fields alongside men at key times such as planting and harvest. At other times they engaged in managing the household, raising children, storing food, and preparing meals. The household itself was, in many respects, their terrain to manage, a zone of some measure of autonomy, comparatively speaking. Certainly a woman's public life remained largely nonexistent, but within the household and the fields, women had some measure of control, albeit limited by modern standards. As enclosure and mechanization of agriculture took women from the fields, women often supplemented the family income through the putting-out system of manufacture.

Cottage Industries, or the Putting-Out System of Manufacture

The putting-out system involved specialized manual labor performed in the home. For example, a small-scale manufacturer might act as a middleman in the production of wool cloth. He—it was almost invariably a male—would arrange to buy wool from farmers who raised sheep. He would transport the wool to a house (or "cottage") where it would be cleaned, then to another where it would be carded, to another where it would be spun into thread, to another where it would be dyed, and finally to another, where it would be woven into cloth. In each cottage a worker, usually a woman, would perform a specialized task and owned the equipment necessary to perform the labor. In some cases she would own wire brushes for carding, a spinning wheel for making thread, vats for dyes, or a loom for weaving. The middleman owned the transportation, the warehouses, and the connections with retail merchants. But when industrial factories replaced the putting-out system, many women moved with their husband and children to the cities, losing their place as mistress of their own domain and becoming yet another alienated laborer in the new system.

The Factory System

Eventually all of the elements of the putting-out system were brought under a single roof, so to speak, with the widespread adoption of the factory system. The inefficiencies of the cottage

industries made it increasingly impossible for them to compete with the more efficient factories. A single factory, for example, replaced the numerous middlemen of the cottage system with a staff of accountants, dispatchers, and supervisors. The women who once worked from their own homes frequently relocated to factory cities, such as Manchester, England, where huge machines were employed to mass-produce textiles. Working long days and long weeks, women were still required to bear and raise children and perform household duties and maintenance; they collectively lost what limited autonomy they might have once enjoyed, and life for many females during the Industrial Age was more difficult and more restricted than before.

Child Labor

Children were increasingly brought into the system as miniature laborers, servicing the machines as only small bodies could and in often-dangerous ways— climbing among rapidly moving parts to reattach broken threads, for example. The entire family was thus impacted by industrialization: a father as unskilled worker, a mother supplementing the income by working six days a week for often less than half a man's wage, and children employed in dangerous tasks for a pittance—all necessary to survive in the new urban industrial environment.

Urban Challenges and Early Attempts at Political Justice

When the Agricultural Revolution sent masses of unemployed workers into the growing cities, there was no such thing as urban planning or civil engineering as we know it today. The process of urban growth was very uneven and made life miserable, if not downright dangerous. Some cities like London, Liverpool, and Manchester did not merely grow; their populations exploded. Slums grew at an alarming rate, as people built the shanties or small apartments they could afford. Children too young to work were often left in the care of siblings only a few years older, with little or no supervision. Sanitation, needless to say, was a major problem, as were alcoholism, rape, and teen pregnancy. Although many better-off persons were able to turn a blind eye to the misery, others could not, and some would not.

The question of whether or not a just and fair society could be maintained in the Industrial Age was eventually undertaken by a few politicians, by workers, and by the emerging class of academics called social scientists. Many tried to improve industrial life through the use of law and public policy, or through academic study and the formation of labor associations, the precursors of modern unions. Members of churches, the clergy, and persons of conscience taught that laws, policies, studies, or associations were not enough, that basic individual virtue was neglected in the overworked life of the industrial laborer. The ancient and medieval model for creating a just society through personal virtue was not abandoned altogether, but large-scale government efforts were increasingly used to address injustice, or in the alternative, to justify in some cases the perceived inevitability of injustice.

Early Parliamentary Reform

Politicians in Britain, for example, introduced the first two Factory Acts in 1819 and 1833, which addressed the worst abuses of the new industrial system. The acts somewhat restricted the employment of children and called for at least minimal education at their place of employment. This, however, did not alleviate the fundamental problems in the current system of

child labor. For example, under the 1833 act, it was still legal to have a nine-year-old boy perform up to eight hours of heavy labor—in the depths of a coal mine, perhaps—and for a thirteen-year-old to work for twelve hours a day, six days a week. The conditions of life and an overall desperation for employment led many families and employers to ignore parts of these laws. Imposing legal restrictions on labor—without changing the underlying conditions that produced desperation—did not work. It would take time for lawmakers to wrap their minds around social conditions generally and then to legislate enforceable and more reasonable change.

The Politics of Labor

There were, however, lawmakers increasingly willing to try to effect reforms in law. Not only did a few politicians urge factory and labor-related reforms as a political solution to the suffering caused by industrialization, but workers themselves joined in movements aimed at secure reforms in law. In the 1820s and 1830s, a general movement for democratization began in England. This paralleled the Jacksonian Age in American politics, whereby men sought the right of political participation without a property ownership requirement. The most significant British labor and democratization movement was known as Chartism, named after a document called "The People's Charter." Chartism was not the product of a single organization, but of a more widespread and deeper agitation for inclusion in government. Instead of a paternalistic system, whereby the better-off elements of society theoretically cared for the poor and unemployed—as a parent might care for a disadvantaged or disabled child—the people of Chartism wanted direct involvement themselves. They wanted, in particular, to be able to represent their interests themselves and to make their own political claims.

It is still unclear exactly how the People's Charter was drafted or who the authors were, but its effects cannot be denied. It was the logical extension of Enlightenment liberties to all men (not women yet) into politics and government. It was a move for democratic participation in an age of republicanism, meaning that all of the people, not just their paternalistic representatives, should have political rights and become part of government. The underlying passion of the Chartist movement is expressed in the following editorial taken from the London Workingmen's Association's newspaper, the *Northern Star*, written in May 1842:

> Three and a half millions have quietly, orderly, soberly, peaceably but firmly asked of their rulers to do justice; and their rulers have turned a deaf ear to that protest. Three and a half millions of people have asked permission to detail their wrongs, and enforce their claims for RIGHT, and the 'House' has resolved they should not be heard! Three and a half millions of the slave-class have holden out the olive branch of peace to the enfranchised and privileged classes and sought for a firm and compact union, on the principle of EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW; and the enfranchised and privileged have refused to enter into a treaty! The same class is to be a slave class still. The mark and brand of inferiority is not to be removed. The assumption of inferiority is still to be maintained. The people are not to be free (Charlton, 34).

The tenor of the message was clear: Britain could choose the path of social justice through political reform, or it could choose violence and revolution by the working classes, the urban poor. As workers increasingly organized—into what would eventually become labor

unions—in order to secure political participation, better working conditions, and financial security during hard times, politicians eventually responded with reforms, not least of which was giving the vote to all men above a set age. Universal male suffrage was in place in Britain by 1884. Women, however, would have to wait until after World War I to secure the vote in Britain.

Social Sciences

Now let us turn our attention to the issue of planned social change in the Industrial Age. Accurate information on the nature of social problems and labor in the Industrial Age was needed if social changes were to be meaningful and permanent. Consequently the first social scientists appeared, and the discipline of statistics, or "social statics" as it was then called, emerged. And one of the first urban problems addressed by the social scientists was disease.

The Manchester Cholera Epidemic of 1832

Cholera was largely an urban epidemic produced in overcrowded urban conditions. Manchester, an overpopulated textile and steel production area, experienced a cholera epidemic in 1832. Cholera is caused by bacteria (usually from too much raw human sewage entering the drinking water supply). In other words, overpopulation and lack of efficient sanitation (outhouses without sewer systems) produced ideal conditions for cholera.

Physician Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth recorded and made public in 1832 the dramatic demise of a Manchester working family due to cholera. Sir James went to a Manchester slum called Irishtown to investigate the case of a worker reported as having cholera-like symptoms:

> I sat by the man's bed for three hours and it was apparent the patient would die … the widow and the three children were moved to the Knott hospital, a converted cotton factory stripped of machinery.… None of them had any sign of the disease. I left the ward to take some refreshment, and when I returned the infant was ill … sick in its mother's lap, it gave a faint cry and had died. The mother was naturally terrified … since [this baby had] had no medicine, and fed only from its mother's breast, and consequently she could have no doubt that it perished from the same causes as its father. I left and when I returned at six o'clock in the morning, another child had severe cramps … and it died. Later the third and eldest child had all the symptoms and perished in one or two hours. In the course of the day the mother likewise suffered from a severe and rapid succession of the characteristic symptoms and died, so that within twenty-four hours the whole family was extinct (Adler, see sources for Chapter 7 this volume, 438).

Public Health and Sanitation

So long as only the working poor were most impacted by the disease, little was done to improve sanitation. In 1842, however, just a few years after the Manchester cholera epidemic, Edwin Chadwick published a pioneering report on slum conditions in London and their attendant horrors, recommending the construction of modern sewers and water purification. Chadwick's

work was an early example of a social study combined with a policy proposal intended to remedy the effects of rapid urbanization during the Industrial Revolution. Chadwick not only documented the 1832 epidemic, but predicted an occurrence of the same kind of catastrophe in London that had occurred in Manchester, giving his study a predictive quality—a social science. But until the health threats posed by the slums actually affected the wealthier segments of London society, there was nothing substantive done.

That changed when cholera broke out in 1858 and threatened to engulf all of London. As noted earlier, the cholera bacterium is known to develop in water containing untreated human waste. Large cities with untreated waste were likely targets for the disease, including both Manchester and nineteenth-century London. Bacteria do not, of course, follow human social hierarchies, and cholera-laden water killed the wealthy in London as well as the impoverished. Unsurprisingly, when the privileged class was threatened by the cholera outbreak of 1858—which originated in London slums—action was finally taken to install a modern sewer system and to provide clean water, if for no other reason than to protect the prosperous population of the city. Sir James, Edwin Chadwick, and others made clear that cholera posed a threat to the entire urban community and eventually motivated London and other cities toward improved sanitation for the entirety of the city's inhabitants, not just the wealthier segments of the population.

Urban Studies

Other early social scientists produced studies investigating population growth and related urban challenges. Their studies, which were statistical in nature, led to a variety of political responses, some of them less favorable than the work of Sir James and Chadwick. The first modern work on economics, for example, was produced toward the end of the eighteenth century, Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776 (see chapter 7). Adam Smith defined many of the core principles of modern economics regarding prices and wages, balancing everyday examples of his principles at work with academic analysis. Smith (1723–1790) was not responding to a crisis of any sort, as Sir James and Chadwick had. Instead, his was largely an academic pursuit unassociated with the advancement of any social policy. That does not mean that his work was filled with concepts that had little or no political use.

Although the terms *free enterprise*, *laissez-faire*, and *capitalism* were not used at the time, Smith advocated a system of freedom and liberty in manufacturing, unfettered by interference from government. He called the economic system he advocated a "system of perfect liberty." Every system must have a power source, an energy that moves it along and motivates humanity to engage in the system. Much as Newton had uncovered the functions of gravity and the laws of motion that governed the movement of the planets and stars, Smith discovered a core economic motivation: human greed. He called it the "invisible hand." According to his theories, the self-interest, or greed, of the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker would combine in ways that benefited them all, a sort of economic synergy based upon greed. Smith's work was thus considered optimistic and supported the principle of inevitable human progress as advocated by Enlightenment thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Smith's near-contemporary the Marquis de Condorcet. It seems odd that a theory of eventual social and economic benefit could be built not upon personal virtue, but upon the unsupervised pursuit of greed.

Population Studies and Demographics

Later social scientists were not as optimistic about future progress and the eventual realization of human justice. Thomas Malthus (1766–1834), an English academic, was responsible in large part for the creation of the modern discipline of demographics—the statistical study of peoples and populations. Just as physical scientists discovered the invariable laws of nature, such as the laws of motion, the law of gravity, or the law of the conservation of matter, so too did social scientists believe that they were uncovering the natural laws governing humanity. Examples include the iron law of wages, the law of supply and demand, and the law of cost (commonly expressed as "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch").

Thomas Malthus believed that through the statistical examination of the relationship between population growth and the food supply, he had uncovered another law governing humanity. He announced his discovery in his pioneering work *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. In it he derived the Malthusian Principle (named after him), a principle that is often stated popularly as, "population will tend to increase until it outgrows the available food supply." Later commentators remarked that if the population ran unchecked, the resultant famine and sharp decline in population would produce what some call a Malthusian catastrophe, or even a Malthusian nightmare. Later commentators would apply it not just to food, but to any commodity that was necessary and scarce, such as oil in our own day. Once supply of the necessary commodity (whether it be food or petroleum) collapsed, a catastrophe would inevitably follow. It is not hard to see that Malthus's work did not lead to optimism regarding social justice: there would always be, it seemed, hungry people and well-fed people, for although the population as a whole outgrew the available supply of food, Malthus acknowledged that some people had secure access to food while others did not. That portion of the human race that lived beyond the effective reach of the available food supply at any given time came to be called the "surplus population." It was, of course, likely that those persons who constituted the "surplus" were also poor and politically weak.

Political, Literary, and Religious Responses

Observers of the negative aspects of industrial urbanization and overcrowding responded in different ways to the social and political realities of the new industrial society. We will briefly examine one political response in Britain, known as Manchester liberalism, a literary response made by the famous English novelist Charles Dickens, and some religious responses—including the Protestant "Social Gospel" movement and a formal response by the Roman Catholic Church contained in the epistle *Rerum Novarum*.

Manchester Liberalism

A group of English capitalists and politicians of this sort, centered in Britain's great industrial center of Manchester, emerged. They are called Manchester liberals. This group combined the economic theories of Adam Smith with the population conclusions attributed to Thomas Malthus into a political philosophy called Manchester Liberalism. They indeed believed strongly in liberty and natural rights—for themselves, that is. They combined this liberal view with laissez-faire capitalism, concluding that one should be free to pursue economic self-interest without governmental restraint. Drawing upon the work of Malthus, they concluded that the government could—and consequently should—do little or nothing to prevent the resultant poverty or lack of rights for unskilled workers or those living in slums. Poverty was, for the

Manchester liberal, a natural and unavoidable consequence of human existence, and that social and political progress for *all* of humanity, particularly the impoverished masses of the cities, was simpleminded or even dangerous: it failed to account for notorious human vices, prevalent largely among the urban poor, it was believed. Such vices included laziness, drinking, and overspending, which could not be cured by a grant of rights or an act of Parliament. Manchester liberals, in their own minds, not only deserved what they got because of their hard work and intelligence, but any attempt to help the poor and unemployed was effectively a form of robbery—stealing from the worthy rich in a vain effort to help the undeserving poor.

Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol

Perhaps the best-known depiction of a Manchester liberal is Charles Dickens's (1812–1870) fictional character Ebenezer Scrooge, from his novel *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens—who personally understood the effects of child labor and poverty—never tired of commenting on the injustices of industrial society in England. In the story, Scrooge urges, in classic Malthusian terms, that if individuals would rather die than split up their family in order to work in government-run labor mills, then they should hurry up and die, and thus "decrease the surplus population." The underlying question Dickens poses is whether or not Scrooge will learn to love other humans—particularly Tiny Tim Cratchett, the crippled son of his employee—and by extension learn compassion for humankind in general and cease to act as a Manchester liberal, claiming Enlightenment-based liberties for himself while denying them to others.

The Social Gospel Movement

Dickens advocated a secular justice arguably based upon religious virtues, but consciously free from advocating organized religion or a particular church. He did, in fact, make effective use of a Christian holiday in *A Christmas Carol* and of "Christian" virtues such as love, kindness, and generosity. But there is, intentionally, no Christianity as such in his story, no Christ in Christmas. Observers have occasionally condemned Dickens for creating a non-Christian Christmas. On the other hand, however, it is true that organized religion had a mixed record regarding social justice and that perhaps a nonreligious alternative was required to address—and possibly even remedy—the social ills of industrialization. Organized religions were known to occasionally weigh in on the side of the powerful and wealthy, causing many believers to become cynical. Dickens was asking, "Is it possible to advocate the many virtues of Christianity without belonging to an organized Christian sect?" It was an emerging question in Dickens's own time and remains relevant today. This should not suggest that religion as a whole would stand idly by and watch the unfolding of human misery that commonly attended industrialization. To the contrary, many organized religions sought ways to make their message even more prominent, to make faith increasingly important in the modern world. A "social gospel" was emerging which called upon a reaffirmation of accepted values, traditional faith, and customary virtues as the bedrock of a new age of justice.

Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918) was a Baptist who ministered among the poor industrial workers of the Hell's Kitchen area of Manhattan. In 1908 he wrote a famous essay on the subject, called *The Social Gospel*. In it he detailed what he saw as the core abuses attendant to industrial life, many of which are still debated today (such as public health care, or in the modern world, socialized medicine). His writing and work represent the social engagement of a

time in American history known as the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s), a period of statistics-driven social activism and justice. Rauschenbusch wrote about a host of social ills attending industrialization: worker alienation; the production of misleading and inferior products; insufficient wages, especially as compared to the great leaps in the amount of wealth harvested by a few persons; the lack of public health care; immoralities such as alcoholism, physical abuse, neglect, gambling, prostitution, and a host of other vices; a lack of government regulation to guarantee purity in food and drugs; the lack of education for children; frequent sexual predations; and declining fertility rates among the urban poor. Rauschenbusch believed that a catastrophe loomed over industrial civilization and—perhaps in contrast to Dickens—that only religious faith and enthusiasm for reform could avert it:

> In the last resort the only hope is in the moral forces that can be summoned to the rescue. If there are statesmen, prophets, and apostles who set truth and justice above selfish advancement; if their call finds a response in the great body of the people; if a new tide of religious faith and moral enthusiasm creates new standards of duty and a new capacity for self-sacrifice … Will some Gibbon of Mongol race sit by the shore of the Pacific in the year AD 3000 and write on the "Decline and Fall of the Christian Empire"?… It will depend almost wholly on the moral forces which the Christian nations can bring to the fighting line against wrong, and the fighting energy of those moral forces will again depend on the degree to which they are inspired by religious faith and enthusiasm. It is either a revival of social religion or the deluge. (285)

Roman Catholicism and Social Issues

The issues discussed in *The Social Gospel* touched not only zones of Protestant concern. In 1891 the Roman Catholic Church weighed in on the issue of the needs of workers in a papal encyclical entitled *Rerum Novarum*, "On New Things." The encyclical called for a reinfusion of Christian values and faith into the needs of the Industrial Age:

> Let the members of the Sacred Ministry exert all their strength of mind and all their diligence … to impress upon men of all ranks the principles of Christian living as found in the Gospel; by all means in their power let them strive for the well-being of all people; and especially let them aim both to preserve in themselves and to arouse in others … the mistress and queen of the virtues, Charity … which is … man's surest antidote against the insolence of the world and immoderate love of self (Zieba, 162).

The fundamental changes of the Industrial Age produced in large measure the societal conditions that led to the increasingly democratic and liberty-laden world in which the reader—it is hoped—now lives. But many important questions remain unanswered in this modern world: Is the mere spread of democratic government sufficient to produce justice? Is greed the best motivation to be found for common material well-being? Or do the answers to social ills lie not in political or economic systems, so much as they do in the development of personal virtue? Is it true that there is more food in the world than ever before, yet arguably more hunger? Is it true that there is more prosperity in the world than ever before, and arguably more want and an

increasing gap between the fewer truly rich and the genuinely miserable poor? Is progress possible, can doom be avoided, or is a catastrophic Malthusian nightmare inevitable? These are among the most significant sociopolitical questions facing a postindustrial, globalizing world.

Conclusion

The revolutions of France and the United States of America were predicated upon the advancement of Enlightenment liberties and political systems grounded in the separation of powers. The revolution in America proved easier to complete and establish. Within a little over fifteen years, the colonists had defeated the British and established constitutional government with a separation of powers Montesquieu would have been proud of. It is true, however, that it merely deferred decisions on critical social questions, such as slavery, which were addressed 150 years ago in the American Civil War and only fifty years ago in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The French Revolution, in some respects, was not successful in that the post-Napoleonic settlement of 1815 restored the monarchy of France under Louis XVIII. The political revolution continued throughout the nineteenth century and spread into other parts of Europe (as the briefly successful 1848 Springtime of Peoples, discussed above, demonstrated). However, the question of democratic as compared to authoritarian government persisted well into the twentieth century, with reactionary monarchies being replaced by totalitarian dictators such as Hitler and Stalin. The revolution over popular government in the West has largely ended in favor of republican constitutional government, but the battle is not yet over in many parts of the Westernized world.

The battles fought over the social consequences of industrial development have been addressed in modern Western nations. But in many countries, the question is not whether or not to adopt social solutions, but how far the country should socialize. Minimum wage, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, regulation of agricultural production and market prices, health care, pure food and drugs, and other similar programs are in place in every major Western nation. Most of the concerns of the Progressive Era have been remedied, or at least responsibly addressed. Less certain are the social reforms needed in those nations following in the path of the West, the developing nations of the third world. Many parts of the globe were former colonies of Western powers, but today they exist without the stable representative governments and comparatively prosperous social conditions enjoyed by their onetime overlords. The dual social and political revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have moved out from the Western core and into the rest of the world. The outcome will most certainly contain violence since longtime elites will be required to adapt to the new political conditions or be replaced, and its peaceful resolution remains unclear.

CHAPTER 11

The World at War

> All the horrors of all the ages were brought together, and not only armies but whole populations were thrust into the midst of them. The mighty educated States conceived, not without reason, that their very existence was at stake. Neither peoples nor rulers drew the line at any deed which they thought could help them to win.… Every outrage against humanity or international law was repaid by reprisals, often of a greater scale and duration.… When [World War I] was over, torture and cannibalism were the only two expedients that civilized, scientific, Christian States had been able to deny themselves; and they were of doubtful utility.
>
> —Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*

Introduction

It is historically conceivable that the twentieth century was the bloodiest one hundred years in human history. Over 150 million people unnecessarily died in armed conflicts, civil wars, revolutions, and political purges. This estimate (based upon all casualties, whether civilian or in uniform) includes the following: World War I (twenty million), the 1917 Soviet Revolution (five million), Joseph Stalin's collectivization and resulting famines (twelve million), World War II (fifty-five million), the United States/Vietnam War (three million), and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (one and a half million). Each of these deadly events involved one or more major Western nations. The nations involved were among the most materially prosperous and well-educated countries in the history of humanity, arguably the true political children of the Enlightenment. The observer must wonder at how these countries, with their unprecedented opportunity to create a *pax mundi*, not only failed to do so, but failed in so catastrophic a manner. Of course, the voyage of human civilization is not yet over, but the ship of civilization has apparently entered very rough seas and, given the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, one wonders at what its future may be. This short chapter is able to review only three of the more significant twentieth-century highlights in our narrative: World War I (1914–1918), World War II (1939–1945), and the US/USSR Cold War (1945–1989).

Origins of World War I

Historians sometimes comment that more ink has been spilled arguing about the origins of World War I than over the origins of any other event in human history. World War I is one of the few times in history that historians can identify a fundamental global transformation in society, politics, international relations, diplomacy, and the arts, and yet its causes remain far from clear. Claims regarding the origins of World War I include the following:

- Conflict arising out of imperial greed and competition over the shrinking number of territories not already under colonial occupation.

- The need to conquer territories in order to secure the raw materials necessary to fuel industrial expansion.
- The desire to conquer territory in order to secure new markets for industrial goods.
- The failure of the nineteenth-century "great power" diplomacy, which had balanced the European powers for nearly a century and had produced a century of near-peace since the end of the Napoleonic Era in 1815.
- Some cite peace-fatigue, meaning that human nature produces the desire for violent struggle as part of some Darwinian impulse to survive and thrive in a competitive and naturally selective national environment.
- Others look to the arms buildup of 1900–1911 as the cause of the conflict, as European nations terrorized each other by building ever-larger armies and navies and as fear trumped the powers of reason not only among the population in general, but among the leadership as well.

These are all considered indirect causes of World War I, the background against which the most advanced peoples in history killed each other by the millions over a period of four years. All of these tensions, driven by a national pride that amounted to global hubris, exploded with the assassination of an Austrian noble, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, in the tiny nation of Serbia on June 28, 1914. This assassination is widely regarded as the direct cause of World War I.

Europe was now headed toward catastrophe and would bring in the rest of the world with it. Barbara W. Tuchman, in her Pulitzer Prize-winning history of the first month of the war, *The Guns of August*, described the sunset of the old order in these eloquent terms, employing the funeral of Britain's King Edward VII in 1910 as a metaphor for the funeral of the *ancien régime* ("old order") of Europe:

> So gorgeous was the spectacle on the May morning of 1910 when nine kings rode in the funeral of Edward VII of England that the crowd, waiting in hushed and black-clad awe, could not keep back the gasps of admiration. In scarlet and blue and green and purple, three by three the sovereigns rode through the palace gates, with plumed helmets, gold braid, crimson sashes, and jeweled orders flashing in the sun. After them came five heirs apparent, forty more imperial or royal highnesses, seven queens—four dowager and three regnant—and a scattering of special ambassadors from uncrowned countries. Together they represented seventy nations in the greatest assemblage of royalty and rank ever gathered in one place and, of its kind, the last. The muffled tongue of Big Ben tolled nine by the clock as the cortege left the palace, but on history's clock it was sunset, and the sun of the old world was setting in a dying blaze of splendor never to be seen again (Tuchman, xv).

After the final shots of the coming war were fired nearly eight years later on November 11, 1918, most of those powerful rulers riding in the funeral cortege would have lost their thrones. Following World War I, there was no German kaiser, no Russian tsar, no Austrian emperor, and what remained of the British monarchy was a mere shadow of its former power and glory. Although nineteenth-century neo-imperial colonial power would not immediately end in 1918 and although many European nations would continue to hold colonies (and would, in fact,

appear to grow more powerful globally), colonialism too was in its sunset years and would not fully recover from the war. Europe was about to slip from its position of global dominance.

World War I is often viewed as round one of a forty-decade conflict that ended in 1945 with World War II. Both wars are increasingly seen as flip sides of the same coin, bookends to the same savage killing that would produce as many as sixty million deaths. In fact, historians are making a case that the conflicts of the two world wars are part of an even larger event that includes the Cold War, a more silent, but deadly, conflict between the two superpowers that emerged from the ashes of the world wars: the United States and the Soviet Union. Additionally, the often-bloody results of decolonization continue around the globe, making the decline of European global hegemony—begun in the Age of Exploration—an event of worldwide dislocation and sociopolitical restructuring likely to continue for centuries to come. There is much to commend this viewpoint.

Perhaps we are too close to events to appreciate the potential validity of this viewpoint. No matter how World War I, World War II, and the Cold War are viewed, the impact of these events is unavoidable and continues today. The fact that this destruction was perpetrated by the most enlightened and prosperous nations ever produced in history was (and is) very sobering. The war caused the literate peoples of Europe to begin asking hard questions about the "inevitable progress" they once felt had been so obvious when it was proclaimed during the Enlightenment and the Age of Revolutions: if education and prosperity cannot prevent such massive, industrialized destruction, then what hope is there for mankind? Is the Enlightenment claim that "mankind can perfect itself" dead?

World War I (1914–1918)

Once formal hostilities began on August 1, 1914, nearly every region of the globe had something it felt was important, perhaps even vital, at stake in the war's outcome. Four of the five Great Powers of Europe—England, Germany, Austria, and Russia—were most directly involved in the conflict. They were joined by the aging and ailing Ottoman Empire, commonly called the "sick man of Europe," since it was widely viewed as an empire on the verge of death. Like almost all of the monarchies of Europe, the Ottoman sultanate would not survive the consequences of the war, and General Mustafa Kemal Ataturk would emerge as the national hero responsible for the establishment of the modern republic of Turkey.

Wilhelm II and the Naval Arms Race

Biography is an important part of the historian's tool kit. Any vision of history that claims to be comprehensive must include some consideration of almost every conceivable aspect of humanity, from whole societies and economies right down to the role played by individuals. We begin our examination of the origins of World War I with a discussion of the actions of Wilhelm II (1859–1941), the unstable German kaiser whose nation is often blamed for beginning the actual conflict. The truth about war guilt is far more complicated than this, but victors often fix primary blame for a conflict on the vanquished, and pointing fingers at Wilhelm II provides no exception to this general rule. Nevertheless, he did contribute materially to the complex causes of the war.

Wilhelm's decision to build up Germany's navy, for example, increased the instability of great power diplomacy, making war more likely. In the nineteenth century, Britain concluded

that it could only maintain its global empire by having two warships for every one warship of all the other nations of the world combined. That, in itself, was provocative—and it contributed to global diplomatic instability, too, of course. Germany's new policy was to continue building warships until there was one German warship for every two British warships. Britain not only sought numerical superiority, but technological superiority as well, and built the Dreadnought class of battleships, beginning in 1905 with the completion of the HMS *Dreadnought*. Germany, Japan, France, and the United States all responded and built versions of the mighty gunship during the next decade. The naval arms race was on, with Britain and Germany leading out. Wilhelm's mercurial behavior and bold, arguably aggressive declarations, combined with Germany's colonial ambitions, did little to ease tensions. Arguably, Wilhelm's attitude and behavior were an indirect cause of the war.

By 1912, following the failure of negotiations to end this arms race, it seemed clear that war was coming. Although nationalists living in the nations called the five Great Powers saw the coming conflict as an opportunity to destroy rivals and gain overall supremacy for their respective nations, others were deeply troubled. Jean Jaures, one of the leading socialists of the times, argued that the brunt of any war would be borne by the labor class. It was workers who would fight and die, and yet they had marginal political rights in some nations, and none at all in others. He opposed any war at all. In contrast, radical socialists such as Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), future dictator of the Soviet Union, welcomed war, since it would pave the way for the violent overthrow of capitalist governments and powers. In the end, the war proved Lenin right in the case of Russia, and nearly right in the case of Germany. War seemingly played into the hands of the radicals, and not of the pacifists like Jaures.

Balkan Nationalism

In the end, perhaps it was nationalism itself that made war unavoidable. Nationalism asserted itself forcefully in the region of Southeastern Europe called the Balkans, where numerous ethnic groups competed over the territory of the dying Ottoman Empire, each claiming that they were a people entitled to a homeland. Macedonians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats, Romanians, and a host of others each competed for their "homeland," which often included territories that were considered the "homeland" of other nationalities. Between 1910 and 1912, a series of wars broke out called the Balkan Wars. Bulgaria, Montenegro, Greece, and Serbia formed the Balkan League and victoriously fought the dying Ottoman Empire. Once the war ended, the victors turned upon each other in a bid to each take their rightful spoils.

It would appear that this was a minor conflict among very small and insignificant nations located in a remote peninsula of Europe. But many members of the Balkan League were also tied into the interests of the Great Powers of Austria-Hungary and Russia. Serbians, for example, are a Slavic people like the Russians, and Russia promoted the interests of Serbians in an effort to gain a foothold on the Mediterranean coast of the Balkans. Austria-Hungary, in contrast, saw neighboring Serbia as its own and opposed any outcome that would make Serbia strong, or worse, make Serbia into a Russian satellite. In June 1914, Austria sent Franz Ferdinand, its archduke and the heir apparent to the throne, to Sarajevo, the capital of Serbia, to restate its claims. The Black Hand, an underground nationalist secret society that may have been supported by Russia, had members waiting in Sarajevo to give the archduke their own special kind of greeting. The assassination of the archduke set in motion a series of secret treaties that brought virtually all of Europe into war within six weeks.

Preparing for War

The commanders and leaders of the Great Powers had, as early as 1905, begun preparations for a coming major war. Had they understood the scale of destruction awaiting them at that time, one would hope that they would have each more seriously pursued a peaceful resolution in the intervening years. The duty to prepare Germany for war fell to a general named Alfred Graf von Schliefen (1833–1913). In 1905, he proposed what has since come to be called the Schliefen Plan. According to that plan, German forces would, in the case of a two-front war with Russia and France, delay Russian troops (who were notoriously slow in the field) while attacking France speedily, overwhelming France with numbers and force—a sort of turn-of-the-century shock and awe. German troops would then board trains and cross back to the Russian front and defeat the ill-armed and poorly led Russian army. The key was to avoid the temptation to weaken the western front before Paris was taken. Von Schliefen argued that things would go so quickly in France that commanders would move troops prematurely out of France to the east and the plan would fail. Von Schliefen's dying words in 1913 were—reportedly—"keep the right wing strong," meaning, do not give in to the temptation to withdraw troops from France prematurely.

The plan failed for a variety of reasons. Commanders had not planned for the soldiers to dig trenches to protect themselves without direct orders to do so—a failure that resulted in a four-year trench-based stalemate that stretched territorially from the English Channel to the Swiss Alps, an expanse called the Western Front. Military commanders were at a loss as to how to respond in this stalemate, and pressure mounted from home governments to get the war over with and win. Over one million had already died, and entire populations wanted the deaths of sons, brothers, and fathers to end. Commanders on all sides responded by ordering bloody frontal assaults against a well-entrenched enemy. Again and again, troops were ordered to go over the top, to leave the trenches and cross over a few hundred yards of field, dodging land mines and weaving through barbed wire, under a hailstorm of large and small artillery and intense field-of-fire machine-gun bursts. The slaughter was immense.

Battle of the Somme (1916)

Numerous major battles raged for months as millions were ordered out of the trenches and into deadly machine-gun fire day after day, week after week. The Battle of the Somme was one such event. Located along the valley of the Somme River in northwestern France, the battle lasted from July through November 1916. On the first day of the battle, the British suffered fifty-seven-thousand-plus casualties, including over nineteen thousand dead. That was just for July 1, 1916. More deadly days would follow. You are probably familiar with the death and destruction of this battle—J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973) and two close friends fought in this protracted battle, aspects of which are memorialized in *The Lord of the Rings*. For example, the battles with Saruman in the book *The Two Towers* feature scenes taken directly from Tolkien's experiences in the Battle of the Somme. The most obvious is, perhaps, the Dead Marshes, where numerous corpses lie underwater. As the Battle of the Somme raged into the months of September and October, the rains began. There was insufficient time for the armies to bury their dead, and many corpses lay in rainwater collected in artillery craters, staring back at the weary but living combatants with dead eyes.

In the end, the Battle of the Somme ended indecisively. In terms of territory, the front lines moved a few miles forward in some places, and back in others. But it was, in contrast, very decisive in terms of overall death and destruction. The Allied Powers had 623,000 casualties, with 146,000 dead and missing, while the Germans alone sustained 465,000 casualties, with 164,000 dead and missing.

Battle of Verdun (1916)

The Battle of Verdun, located in northeastern France, lasted ten months, from February to December 1916. This was not, however, a battle to conquer territory or move the front line. It was a war of attrition. The point of the German attack, under the command of Field Marshall Erich von Falkenhayn, was to bleed France to death by forcing France to send in more and more men to die. The German objective at Verdun was that two French soldiers would die for every one German soldier. Arguably, this battle saw the largest concentration of artillery in history, and a bombardment of the area began that lasted for months. The soldiers coined names for the battle, such as the "mincing machine" or "the furnace." Orders for a French unit to move to Verdun were considered a death sentence, but the French were determined not to lose this historically significant territory. "*Ils ne passeront pas*," they cried, "they shall not pass!" In the end, Verdun produced 378,000 French casualties, including 163,000 dead, and 330,000 German casualties, of whom 143,000 died. Never had so many died in so small a space in so short a time as had died in World War I and in such cataclysmic battles as the Somme and Verdun—and many, many others. The numerous World War I graveyards spread across northern France and Flanders are a sobering reminder of the human cost of the war.

New Weapons

World War I introduced new weapons, for which not only the commanders but the individual soldiers, too, were unprepared. In addition to the machine gun, which had been invented earlier but never used on this scale, were added the flamethrower, which coated victims in burning napalm, and poison gas. World War I was an industrial war, and the chemical inventions of the Second Industrial Age were put to the service of destruction. These new forms of death left deep psychological scars on the survivors, as recorded by Wilfred Owen (1893–1918) in his famous poem *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* ("How Sweet and Noble It Is to Die for One's Country"). Describing the panic that unavoidably ensues when soldiers "drunk with fatigue" experience a poison gas attack, Owens tells of one soldier who fails to put on his gas mask in time, who flails about in pain as he breathes in the poison and he begins over a period of hours to drown in the blood and mucus produced by his own damaged lungs. Owens concludes that anyone that witnessed the suffering and death of a soldier dying from poison gas:

> …would not tell with such high zest
> To children ardent for some desperate glory,
> The old Lie; *Dulce et Decorum est*
> *Pro patria mori* (21).

Colonial Participation

Colonial nations were called into the conflict as well, and combat units from Africa fought for their colonial overlords, fueled by thin promises of independence once victory was secured. It is estimated that nearly six hundred thousand African subjects were pressed into service by France, of which seventy-eight thousand were killed. Algeria, for example, was twice promised independence for service to the nation of France, during World War I and again during World War II. Although tens of thousands perished to secure the promised independence, it never materialized. Finally, between 1954 and 1962, Algeria gained its independence in a protracted guerilla war that embittered both nations and empowered militant fundamentalists in Algeria. Based upon what seemed like solid guarantees from the British government, the Arab Revolt, led by Emir Faysal (1885–1933, later king of Syria, Iraq, and Jordan) of Medina and British Colonel T. E. Lawrence (1888–1935), often called Lawrence of Arabia, ended Ottoman rule only to see promises of an independent Arab state partially fulfilled at best, and in reality largely unfulfilled. The nations of the British commonwealth were also pressed into imperial service. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, or ANZAC, participated in several major battles and lost thousands upon thousands of soldiers. This was indeed a worldwide war, as the military involvement of these colonies included fighting campaigns located outside of Europe. The war witnessed numerous other epic battles, fought in diverse locations on at least three continents. Examples include the Battle of Gallipoli (located near the Dardanelles Straits in Asia Minor, in modern Turkey), the Palestine Campaign in the Middle East, and battles in South Africa. Although many of these battles were deadly beyond comparison with past wars, (see the discussion of the Battle of Verdun, above) proved to be as deadly as the Battle of the Somme.

The Demise of Russia (1917)

Not only did soldiers die by the millions, but entire nations perished as well. For Russia, the war was a complete disaster. Russia left the war in November 1917, following the Bolshevik revolution that put Lenin and the Communists in power and created the Soviet Union. Russia sustained the most casualties of any participating nation: 1,811,000 military deaths and an estimated 1,500,000 civilian deaths—a total of 3,311,000 dead and nearly 5,000,000 wounded. It is not difficult to understand why the revolution came about: people could no longer trust a government that continued to fight under such conditions for no apparent reason. Effectively, Lenin's coup was strongly favored for success by several factors, including (1) the incompetence of Russian command, (2) the corruption of military and governmental leadership, and (3) the disconnection of Tsar Nicholas II (1868–1918) of the Romanov dynasty from the realities of life in Russia and the horrors of the war.

America Joins the Allied Forces (1917)

When Russia collapsed in revolution, the Allies entreated the United States to take its place. But the war was not a priority for Americans, who saw it as a distant and senseless war among Europe's nations possessed of marginal rationality. Besides, the American population now included millions of ethnic Germans, as well as citizens of British origins: whose side should America choose? The decision was effectively made for the United States when a

desperate German navy decided to end trade between America and Britain. A German submarine, one of the many, many new weapons of the war, sank the passenger steamer *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915. The ship sank in just eighteen minutes, killing 1,198 of the 1,959 persons aboard. A decision had earlier been made to arm and fortify passenger ships such as the *Lusitania* and incorporate them into the merchant marine. There was, in all fairness to Germany, much debate as to whether or not it was a de facto warship hiding behind a host of civilian passengers. The furor aroused by the attack combined with other factors (such as the public disclosure of German espionage efforts intended to expand the ongoing US-Mexico conflict—the famous "Zimmermann Telegram"—intended by Germany to force America to remain on its own side of the Atlantic) to move the United States toward war with Germany. In 1917, America joined the side of the Allies.

Impact of the War

By the end of the war, on November 11, 1918 (known as Veterans' Day in the United States), not only did African-Americans feel that they had earned full political status in a segregated America, but women had done their part in the war effort as well and sought the vote—that is, suffrage—in America and Britain. As millions of men were conscripted or volunteered for military duty, women often took their places in factories. The manufacture of uniforms, bullets, shells, and bombs was just as important to the war effort as the soldiers on the front, and the women workers in factories and munitions gave their lives, too, in order to secure victory. Hadn't they earned the right to full citizenship?

When the war ended, the victors joined together at that great symbol of past authority, the Palace at Versailles. The event is called the Versailles Peace Conference, or the Paris Peace Conference, but arguably it was about anything but peace. World War I was so large, so brutal, and so final that many contemporaries called it "the war to end all wars." But what transpired afterward at Versailles led one British general, Field Marshall Earl Wavell, to comment, "After 'the war to end war,' they seem to have been pretty successful in Paris at making a 'peace to end peace" (Fromkin, vi).

The motivations behind the conference differed for each of the victors. Although the motives of the British and American delegations were arguably mixed, France's was clear: revenge. Just as Germany had tried to crush France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, so now did France seek to destroy Germany. The Versailles agreements fixed all blame for the conflict on Germany and ordered Germany to pay reparations to France that would cripple the German economy for decades, if not forever. Who could blame France? But the result was hardly a formula for peace, and as we shall see, rather, it laid the groundwork for World War II.

There were, however, others who wanted something from the war. American President Woodrow Wilson talked about self-determination, and in light of the promises made by Britain and France to give independence, representatives from colonies and regions around the globe flocked to Versailles. They were sorely disappointed in the result of the conference.

Aspirations for Colonial Independence

French Indochina remained a colony, as did entire regions of Africa. Britain and France, far from securing Arab self-determination, carved up the region between them, France taking Syria and creating Lebanon, and Britain taking what would become Iraq, Jordan, and

Israel/Palestine. In response, independence movements in the colonies gained strength, and many of the conflicts of the twentieth century trace their origins to neo-imperialism, and in particular, to the Versailles agreements following World War I. Bloodied, in massive debt, and on the verge of collapse from within, the colonial powers were determined to rule the rest of the world.

World War I permanently changed the borders of Europe, caused the collapse of nations, changed social, labor, and political arrangements in the West, promoted global hostility in colonies, and set the stage for World War II.

World War II

The crises of religious and political authority identified in chapters 6, 7, and 8 continued into the twentieth century and intensified as a result of World War I and World War II. Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859) described the early nineteenth-century European imperialism of his own day as "the most frightful of all spectacles, the strength of civilization without its mercy." He died before World War I. Had he lived to see World War I, the strength of the "civilization without its mercy" would have been even more abundantly apparent. One can only wonder what he might have thought about the genocides and inhuman atrocities of World War II. Throughout most of human history, it was the "barbarians" that perpetrated atrocity, but in the twentieth century, it was civilization's turn to perform the work of destruction on a scale unimaginable without the raw power provided by industry and science. The wars and genocides of the twentieth century did much to destroy the concept of inevitable human progress that the Marquis de Condorcet so confidently defined during the Enlightenment as the "indefinite perfectibility of mankind." After the wars, there was very good reason to conclude that mankind was not only unwilling to perfect itself, but was fundamentally incapable of doing so.

For millennia, humanity had looked outside of itself for direction—had sought for moral guidance in the quest for perfection through religion, counting on God for assistance. But the very concept of religion had come under serious and sustained attack in modern times. Karl Marx (1818–1883) called religion the opiate of the masses, a drugged dream in which we desensitized ourselves to the pains of existence. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) declared that religion was a collective delusion created by humanity. Finally, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) declared, "God is dead … and we have killed him," meaning that the human religious impulse was dead (Pearson, xxv). Without God, humanity was on its own. Could a just and fair society be built on the basis of power alone?

One prominent historian, Paul Johnson, noted the consequences that flowed from the end of belief in human progress and from the damage done to religious belief and authority in modern times:

> Nietzsche rightly perceived that the most likely candidate would be what he called "The Will to Power," which offered a far more comprehensive and in the end more plausible explanation of human behavior than either Marx or Freud. In place of religious belief there would be secular ideology. Those who had once filled the ranks of the totalitarian clergy would become totalitarian politicians. And above all, the Will to Power would produce a new kind of Messiah, uninhibited by any religious sanctions whatever, and with an unappeasable appetite for controlling mankind (Johnson, 48).

The metaphorical vision of a new messiah, unbounded by moral codes, unfettered by religious prohibitions and restrictions, is summed up in William Butler Yeats's (1865–1939) poem *The Second Coming* (1920). Comparing his world to a "widening gyre" in which the "centre cannot hold," Yeats envisions a mythical beast, part human part animal, arising form the desert wasteland, the modern Messiah to be born in Bethlehem:

> … twenty centuries of stony sleep
> were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
> And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
> Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born? (187).

World War I marked the end of the *ancien régime* (French for "Old Order"), the effective end of aristocratic government and absolute monarchy in Europe, and some would argue, the eventual demise of the religious impulse in Europe. As Johnson further observed, the death of the religious impulse in the modern world and the destruction of the old order was a summons to what he called "Gangster Statesmen" to appear. In the time between World War I and World War II (1918–1939, called the interwar period), these gangster statesmen appeared. We begin our study of World War II by studying the career of one such gangster statesman, Adolph Hitler—founder of Nazi Germany and primary author of World War II.

The Rise of Fascism

Adolph Hitler (1889–1945), although not the first fascist, was the most famous fascist of the twentieth century. Fascism was an ideology of power, where might most definitely made right. Hitler did not invent fascism, but he exploited it very well. Fascism was invented in the 1920s by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (1883–1945). It was a curious mixture of socialism and laissez-faire economics: industry and production were nationalized and run by the state, but private property was largely undisturbed. Thus, the productive capability of the entire nation was bent to the will of the state, but private life remained relatively unchanged.

Fascism was not so much a political ideology as the rejection of political ideologies—particularly a rejection of the ideologies of the *ancien régime*. It was an anti-ideology. It was inherently anti-intellectual, anti-faith, and anti-peace. Fascism promoted a one-party political system focused upon its leader, commonly called "the boss"—thus giving the office a gangster flavor, reflected in the titles of "Il Duce" ("The Boss") for Italy's Benito Mussolini and the "Führer" ("The Leader") for Hitler. Fascism also produced a multitude of slogans, many of which were mere expressions of the will to power. Examples of such expressions include:

- "The boss is always right!"
- "Believe! Obey! Fight!"
- "Better to live one day as a lion than a thousand years as a sheep!"
- "One minute on the battlefield is worth a lifetime of peace!"
- "Nothing has ever been won in history without bloodshed!"

Fascist propaganda certainly used a lot of exclamation points!

Germany between the Wars

The interwar period was a time of great trial in Germany, and the need for a boss, a powerful leader, was becoming stronger. When World War I ended, the German army surrendered while it was still on foreign soil. Normally, surrender only occurred when one's back was against the proverbial wall, when it was a last resort to save one's own territory. Many in the German army, unaware of the starvation and suffering occurring within Germany itself, felt betrayed by their leadership. And the war-guilt clause of the Versailles treaty enhanced their bitterness. Many Germans began to look for an enemy within and targeted German Jews (who were already the subject of fear and loathing). Economic hardship increased bitterness and frustration. In 1922 and 1923, inflation increased in Germany to the point where money was worth less than the paper it was printed on: people would literally use printed money to light fires for cooking. In 1923, one US dollar was worth 800 million reichsmarks. Most people were financially ruined, but those few who had access to foreign currencies and goods made fortunes. There were, of course, German Jews among those who prospered, and the irrational hatred of Jews deepened.

As the economic crisis worsened, the German communist movement began to prosper. Fearing a revolution in Germany, the United States intervened in 1924 through the Dawes Plan. It convinced France to forego some reparations payments and withdraw its troops from the Ruhr valley, which was German territory. The plan worked from 1924 to 1929, establishing an acceptable standard of living for Germans. However, the financial damage, and perhaps more importantly, the psychological damage remained: persons of thrift were reduced to begging, while persons of questionable loyalty, including in their minds the Jews, prospered from the misery of the decent and hardworking people of Germany. Many came to despise the Weimar Republic (the postwar German government), which allowed such things to happen.

Two political movements emerged in 1920s' Germany: the Social Democrats, a genuinely labor-based workers' party, and the National Socialist German Workers' Party, called the Nazi party. In 1923, at the height of the economic crisis, Hitler led a revolt intended to take control of the government, called the Munich "Beer Hall" Putsch. It was a failure, and Hitler, who had been arrested along with other Nazi leaders previously for bank robbery, was again jailed. While in jail, he outlined the core principles of Nazism in his book *Mein Kampf*, or *My Struggle*.

Hitler's core Nazi principles included:

- *Anti-Semitism*: Jews were to blame for the nation's troubles and were, from birth, traitors and enemies of the German people.
- *Rejection of the Versailles treaty*: The war-guilt clause was a sham, as was the entire agreement.
- *Confiscation of illicit profits*: Government confiscation included profits made from the war itself by munitions manufacturers and others.
- *Protection of the middle class from ruinous greed*: Big business was identified as the cause of socioeconomic decline.
- *Land redistribution for peasants:* Large landholders, including the old nobility of Prussia and Germany, were squeezing out the peasants, and Hitler promised to end this.

Mein Kampf arguably expressed hatred as much as anything else: hatred of the Jews of Central Europe, hatred of the Weimar Republic, and hatred of capitalists.

Hitler Takes Power

From 1924 to 1929, the relative economic stability gained from the Dawes Plan weakened the Nazi message, and Hitler's party was a marginal voice with little power. However, with the onset of global depression in 1930, the Nazi message found a more attentive audience, and Nazi political power grew. During the depression, unemployment in Germany rose from about two million to over six million (or nearly 25 percent of the labor force), the Weimar government became increasingly unstable, and in a series of elections, the Nazis and the communists gained considerable power. In 1933, the German president, General Paul von Hindenburg, was essentially forced to make Hitler the chancellor (or prime minister) of Germany. Using a fire in the parliament building as a pretext for a national emergency, Hitler had the "Enabling Acts" passed—a series of legal measures that concentrated all power into his hands. Within a few weeks, Hitler transformed the Weimar Republic into the Nazi dictatorship.

Hitler militarized the German state, creating the Gestapo or Secret Police to eliminate dissension, and the SS or Schutzstaffel to keep the military in line politically. In 1935 he legalized the segregation and persecution of Jews that was already taking place through passage of the Nuremburg Laws, which effectively made German Jews noncitizens. The legalized persecution of Jews reached its peak in 1942 at the Wannsee conference, a secret meeting of high-ranking Nazi military and political officials, at which the plans for the so-called "final solution" were set in motion and orders were issued commencing systematic attempts to exterminate the Jews of Europe in death camps, known as the Holocaust. Eventually, as many as six million Jews would be systematically put to death in concentration camps, in some of the most horrible ways imaginable. But Nazi hatred did not stop with the Jews only: nearly two million Roman Catholic Poles were put to death, together with gypsies, homosexuals, and Jehovah's Witnesses. The methodical, efficient, industrialized elimination of so-called subhuman races, particularly Jews, marks a low point in human history.

Hitler did, however, deliver economically, and by 1936 the German economy rebounded. The production of the Volkswagen car and other state-controlled industries provided jobs and led to material improvement. Germans increasingly took pride in their nation and in their führer. Hitler was emboldened and decided to make a military move toward the eventual domination of Europe. In March 1938, the Nazi party acquired control of Austria, an event you may be familiar with through the musical play *The Sound of Music*. Later, in 1938, Hitler demanded that a former part of Germany, called the Sudetenland, be taken away from Czechoslovakia and given to Germany, and threatened to invade the region. The British, under Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940), and the French, under Edouard Daladier (1884–1970), agreed to this, out of fear of Hitler's aggressive attitude and in order to appease him. Hitler moved against Poland in 1939, and World War II began in Europe.

The European Theater

From 1939 into 1945, war raged in what is called the European Theater. Nearly every country of Europe was involved in the war, and few countries, such as Switzerland, managed to remain neutral. Hitler invaded Paris quickly, using a combination of air power and tanks called

blitzkrieg, or "lightning war." He then moved against Britain with rockets and bombs in the Battle of Britain. For a short period of time, it appeared that Hitler might succeed and all of Western Europe would fall before him. More and more, Hitler was looking like the secular messiah many Germans desired. But Britain withstood the attack. Italy, an ally of Germany and a member of the Axis alliance, invaded North Africa in September 1940, and Germany followed, creating a southern front to the war and moving it onto another continent. The North African Front would be active from 1940 until the British defeated the German Afrika Korps under the command of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel (1891–1944) at the Battle of El Alamein in November 1942.

A few days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which we will discuss shortly, Hitler declared war on the United States on December 11, 1941. It is unlikely that the United States would have become involved in the European Theater otherwise. Hitler's unnecessary declaration brought the United States into the war in a big way. Mobilizing millions of troops, Britain, the remnants of the French Republic, and the United States invaded the continent from the English Channel on D-day, June 6, 1944, and began the long march to Berlin.

Hitler, who had earlier signed a nonaggression pact with Soviet leader Stalin, made another serious mistake by invading the Soviet Union in 1941. He was now engaged in a three-front war in North Africa, France, and Russia. The eastern, or "Russian," front culminated in the Battle of Stalingrad, which lasted from July 1942 into February 1943. The battle produced over one and a half million casualties and is considered the bloodiest battle of human history. In the end, Germany had to withdraw and fight a gradual defensive war while the Soviets advanced on Germany itself, eventually capturing Berlin and accepting Germany's surrender on May 7, 1945. This brought the war in Europe to a bloody, destructive close.

The Pacific Theater

The war in Europe, as we have seen, was produced from the combination of severe economic depression, national guilt, radical political ideology, extreme nationalism, and racial pride. Accounting for each of those influences as the compound causes of World War II in Europe is extremely challenging. The war in the Pacific is easier to understand as the result of imperialism.

Japan Modernizes: The Meiji Reforms

Japan became an industrialized modern nation by sheer determination and force of will. Abandoning its feudal past of samurais, shoguns, and mikados, a period known as the Meiji Reform began in 1871, the same year in which the empire of Germany was founded. The Meiji reformers, having ended the shogunate in 1867, launched a series of highly effective reforms representative of the changes witnessed during the Second Industrial Revolution in Europe and the United States (see chapter 8).

There were four major areas of reform:

- *Military Reform.* The samurai system of military organization was forcibly ended, and a modern professional army was established, with Western tactics and weapons.

- *Financial Reform*. A new currency was created, controlled by a central bank. Additionally, modern banking, stock and exchange markets, and corporations replaced former business and financial institutions.
- *Agrarian Reform*. The feudal system of nobility and landed fiefs was abolished. Land ownership was encouraged through Western-style land surveys and title and records offices, all financed through Western-style mortgage banking and enforced in Western-based courts by means of Western legal codes.
- *Constitutional Reform.* A constitution—with a parliament and an emperor with limited powers—was established. A small but influential electorate was able to maintain these reforms in the face of numerous samurai rebellions.

Japan industrialized quickly as government funds were used to create railroads, harbors, shipyards, modern mines, steel factories, and munitions works. Later, in the 1890s, these industries were sold to private investors, establishing the Japanese model of government-sponsored industrialization and eventual private ownership called *zaibatsu*.

Imperial Japan

Like its European counterparts, Japan increasingly looked abroad for raw materials for its industry and markets for its manufactured goods. Imperialism seemed the solution. The result of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 to 1905 was victory for Japan, and Korea was formally annexed into a growing Japanese empire. During the 1930s, Japan expanded even further. In 1931, having engineered a political crisis in the area, Japan invaded and occupied the region of China called Manchuria. The effects of global depression and imperial expansion empowered the military, and the military command took over effective control of the government of Japan in the 1930s. In order to maintain its empire, Japan needed access to oil, and oil-rich Indonesia became the next target for imperial annexation. Although imperial Japan had increasingly come into conflict with American interests in the Pacific, the move against Indonesia brought the two nations into direct conflict.

America and Japan Collide (1898 and Beyond)

Although Americans do not usually regard their nation as imperialistic, there was, in fact, an American empire of sorts in the first half of the twentieth century. Beginning with the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, the United States saw itself as the regional hegemon in the western hemisphere. The Spanish-American War of 1898 provided the United States with an opportunity to establish an empire in the region of the Caribbean Sea, stretching across the Pacific. It included colonial occupation of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and a host of other islands in the east, the annexation of Hawaii, and the forcible occupation of the Philippines in the west.

The completion of the Panama Canal in 1914, and colonial occupation of Panama itself, completed the American empire. When Japan's expansion moved southward toward Indonesia, the two empires collided. The power of both empires lay in their respective navies. Japan decided to neutralize the American navy by destroying US aircraft carriers while they were

supposedly in Pearl Harbor, and attacked on December 7, 1941. Although several battleships were destroyed or severely damaged in the attack, the aircraft carriers were not in port on that day, and American naval power remained largely intact. The war in the Pacific had begun. It was not caused by economic hardship, national despair, or radical ideology, although both sides would eventually attempt to paint it in those terms.

Pearl Harbor (1941)

Japan quickly took control of several Pacific regions, such as the Philippines, parts of the Asian mainland, and numerous small islands. The Battle of Midway, only six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, resulted in a Japanese naval defeat. Japan lost four aircraft carriers, one heavy cruiser, 248 naval aircraft, and three thousand men. In contrast, the United States lost one carrier, one destroyer, eighty-nine aircraft, and three hundred men. Japan had failed to destroy the aircraft carriers of the United States at Pearl Harbor, but at Midway the United States had destroyed Japan's. This was the turning point in the war in the Pacific.

Japanese-American Internment

The attack on Pearl Harbor—a part of Hawaii, which was then a colony of the United States—was viewed as an attack on American soil itself. Fear of a Japanese invasion followed. There is serious debate over whether or not the fear of invasion was justified. At the time, the fear was very real, but the likelihood of invasion was minimal. Japan did not have the resources to invade, and the US navy was not, in fact, crippled and still formed a serious obstacle to an amphibious landing on the scale necessary to conquer and occupy the United States. Certainly after the Battle of Midway, the Japanese navy was increasingly on the defensive.

However, fear of invasion led to the imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of Japanese-Americans in concentration camps spread over the western United States. Many of those interned were immigrants from Japan, but tens of thousands were United States citizens. They were imprisoned without trial, or even an accusation of any crime, arguably in violation of the Sixth Amendment. And they were not imprisoned because they had committed any act of disloyalty or treason against the United States. In fact, Japanese-Americans were loyal, and Japanese-American units served with great honor and distinction during the war. Japanese-Americans were imprisoned solely based upon their race and national origin. Families were separated and properties sold on the cheap. Long after even the remotest threat of an invasion had passed, they were kept locked up. Finally, in 1944, the US Supreme Court in a unanimous opinion in the case of *Ex Parte Endo* effectively brought the internment to a conclusion. In 1988, the government of the United States apologized for the unconstitutional imprisonment and paid about $1.6 billion in reparations to the heirs of the over 110,000 Japanese-Americans imprisoned. The incident serves as a reminder that irrational fear may lead to atrocity in even the most educated and democratic of nations.

The balance of the war in the Pacific Theater consisted largely of a series of bloody amphibious landings by US forces, called island-hopping. Several of the battles were particularly bloody, such as Iwo Jima in February and March 1945 and Okinawa in March through June 1945. Although the deadly war in Europe was over in May of that year, the United States advanced its preparations to invade Honshu, the main island of Japan. It was believed that this would entail the amphibious landing of perhaps millions of American troops, facing the stiff

armed resistance of the Japanese population. Estimates of the potential deaths on both sides are in the hundreds of thousands at the least, and even rise up to three million estimated dead.

The Bomb

The United States had recently completed the research necessary to construct the world's first atomic weapons as part of the Manhattan Project. The first atomic explosion occurred on July 16, 1945, at Trinity Site in New Mexico. After witnessing the awe-inspiring explosion, scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904–1967), who was in charge of the Manhattan Project, quoted Hindu scripture: "Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds." Two atomic bombs were created and sent to Guam.

President Harry S. Truman (1884–1972) considered the potential death toll from an invasion of Honshu and approved the use of atomic bombs instead, hoping that their destructive capacity would convince the Japanese government to surrender without invasion. On August 6, 1945, the American bomber *Enola Gay* dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, killing an estimated 140,000 civilians in a single blast. After the Hiroshima bombing, President Truman, in an attempt to force surrender, announced, "If they do not accept our terms, they may expect a rain of ruin from the air the likes of which has never been seen on this earth." On August 9, 1945, a second atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki, killing as many as 80,000. Japan surrendered unconditionally on August 15, 1945. The war in the Pacific was over.

Casualties of World War II

The total death count for World War II stands at about fifty-five million, the majority of those being civilians (either deliberately targeted by nearly all nations involved, or those persons who had the misfortune to be located in the path of destruction). Although many nations sustained hundreds of thousands of casualties, the Soviet Union lost at least as many people (about twenty-three million) as all of the other nations who fought in Europe combined. In Asia, China bore the brunt of the war's death and destruction (between fifteen million and twenty million). By comparison, Japan lost about three million, the United Kingdom about 450,000, and the United States over 418,000. The world would never be the same following the war. The most advanced, civilized, educated, and prosperous nations in history had now twice proven themselves to be the bloodiest and most destructive.

Although Western nations and Japan would recover from the destruction, it should come as no surprise that a dark shadow passed over the Soviet Union and China in the coming decades. Many millions more would unnecessarily die under the communist gangster-regimes of Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) and Mao Zedong (1893–1976). The shadow of nuclear destruction and massive annihilation remains over the entire world, as nuclear nations may now say, as Oppenheimer did, "Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds."

The Healing Power of the Industrialized World

Before leaving the subject of World War II, let us investigate how the managerial techniques of modern industrial society helped produce social justice in some of the events of the war and afterward, while causing gross injustice in others.

Following the war, American General George Marshall became US Secretary of State. He advocated the European Recovery Plan, commonly called the Marshall Plan, named in his honor. Marshall understood that economic depression, national guilt, personal and collective despair, and fear played a critical role in the rise of Adolph Hitler and other gangster-messiahs to power. Marshall believed, also, that unless Europe was rebuilt following the war, it would descend into yet another cycle of violence and with it, perhaps, would descend all civilization. The plan was to invest billions of dollars into rebuilding Europe—to ease border restrictions, to open up markets, and to allow people to engage once again in economic growth and gain a measure of prosperity, and with it, a sense of dignity. The plan, which was part of a series of economic measures intended to put Europe back on its financial feet, worked. In 1953, Marshall was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Marshall stands as an example of a military commander who successfully "beat swords into plowshares" and helped produce peace and stability.

The Destructive Power of the Industrialized World

At other times, the nations involved in World War II used the techniques of modern management less honorably, as in the case of the firebombings of Japan. Robert S. McNamara (1916–2009) was hired by Harvard University in 1940 and became both the highest-paid and youngest assistant professor in Harvard's history. McNamara later served as an adjutant to General Curtis LeMay (1906–1990), who commanded US bomber aircraft in the Pacific. Frustrated with the inefficiency of bombing raids, particularly the ratio of Japanese killed to the number of bombs dropped, LeMay relied on McNamara's statistical analyses in deciding to firebomb the major cities of Japan, systematically burning to death nearly five hundred thousand Japanese civilians.

McNamara was the pioneer of a management technique called "systems analysis," or "policy analysis," through which statistics helped a commander or decision maker determine the most effective course of action. Systems analysis arguably proved helpful in ending the war in Japan. However, when McNamara later served as US Secretary of Defense under presidents Kennedy and Johnson during the Vietnam War, the technique came under criticism and arguably proved a failure. The use of statistical information removed decision makers personally from the destruction of hundreds of thousands of lives.

The Cold War (1945–1989)

Between 1945 and 1989, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) were at war with each other. There was no sustained and direct military confrontation between the two nations, whose stature and influence in the world earned them the name superpowers. But there were a variety of global battlefields across which the two superpowers contended. These contentions took numerous forms (which will be presented in some detail later).

Origins of the Cold War

The Cold War emerged out of the international settlements at the end of World War II. Because Hitler had attacked both the United States and the Soviet Union, these two nations were thrown into an alliance against the Nazi regime. Neither country had much in common with the

other except for a temporary union against their mutual enemy, the Hitler regime. As the war came to a close, deep mutual distrust again emerged, and the stage was set for significant postwar disagreement as the two nations vied for control over the remains of war-torn Europe. The Allied powers held three important conferences during World War II, and the postwar division of Europe was discussed in at least two of them. Rivalry over the division of Europe came into the open at the postwar Potsdam Conference.

The Potsdam Conference

Joseph Stalin (USSR), Winston Churchill and Clement Atlee (UK), and Harry S. Truman (USA) met between July 17 and August 2, 1945, and discussed the postwar division of Europe. The conference took place in the context of an ongoing USSR military occupation of much of central Europe, the successful testing of an atomic weapon by the United States, an ongoing election in the United Kingdom (which Churchill lost and Atlee won), and the participation of Harry S. Truman, new to the presidency following the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The comparative strength and position of each participating nation had a pronounced impact on the outcome of the conference. The most vexing question the victors faced was not whether to divide Europe, but to decide which of them controlled which part, under what conditions, and for how long. The political and economic future of the nations to be divided was at stake, and the ideological boundaries of the Cold War were evident in key outcomes of the conference.

Guiding Principles of the Division

The Allies agreed upon five guiding principles for the division of Central and Eastern Europe, namely: denazification, demilitarization, democratization, decentralization, and decartelization (elimination of monopolies or near-monopolies in the economy). These principles were followed to one degree or another, although the Soviet Union and the United States would later disagree strongly, with the United States accusing the Soviet Union of failing to secure democracy in its occupied areas and the Soviet Union accusing the United States of failing to denazify areas under its control. These five principles were implemented by the victorious Allied nations through five policies:

- *Division and Occupation:* Germany and Austria would be divided into four zones of occupation, and the capital cities of each (Berlin and Vienna, respectively) would also be divided into four zones of occupation. The Soviet Union, United States, United Kingdom, and France would be the occupying powers.
- *Territorial Adjustments:* The borders of Germany would be shifted to the west, to the Oder and Niesse rivers (the "Oder-Niesse Line"), resulting in a 25 percent reduction in size and a near reestablishment of Germany's 1937 borders. The newly constituted occupied Germany would lose significant industrial centers, particularly in the region known as Upper Silesia. All German annexations were reversed, including the Sudetenland, Alsace-Lorraine, Austria, and western Poland.
- *Reparations:* The Soviet Union would receive reparations for the war, partly through the payment of 10 percent of German industrial production beyond what was deemed necessary to reestablish a peaceful Germany.

- *Demilitarization:* All military industry in Germany would be dismantled, including civilian shipyards and aircraft factories. The manufacture of all metals and chemicals associated with warfare would be reduced to a minimum level. The economy would be decentralized and emphasis placed upon agriculture and "peaceful" domestic manufactures.
- *Depopulation:* German populations east of the new borders would be expelled from the region.

Within a short time, the allied powers were in open conflict, with the United States and the Soviet Union making accusations and counteraccusations concerning the enforcement of the Potsdam agreement. These disagreements mark the beginning of the Cold War in earnest. The enduring contentions of the Cold War may be characterized as follows.

Cold War Tensions and Conflicts

The Cold War was, above all else, an ideological conflict in which each side saw itself as the sole representative, champion, and guardian of truth and goodness, and saw the other as the representative, champion, and guardian of error and evil. Thus, the United States portrayed itself as the embodiment of multiparty democracy and capitalist economics. The Soviet Union portrayed itself as the embodiment of single-party democracy and socialist economics. Each nation tended to see itself as wholly good and tended to see the other as wholly evil. This led to tension and conflict on a variety of fronts, beginning with deep-seated ideological conflict.

Global Ideological Engagement

The ideological conflict was viewed as part of a global conflict, with each superpower actively promoting its own system and values abroad, and each believing that in the future the entire world would either be "Western" (i.e., would embrace and practice multiparty democracy and capitalist economics under the leadership of the United States) or "Eastern" (i.e., would embrace and practice single-party democracy and socialist economics under the leadership of the Soviet Union).

Global Division along Ideological Lines

Two "worlds" came into existence across the globe in the minds and hearts of many peoples. The United States and its allies formed the leadership of the *first world*. The first world was also called the "West," "free world," the "developed world," or the "capitalist world." The *second world* consisted of the Soviet Union and its allies and was also called the "communist world," the "East,"or the "socialist world." Later, a third group of nations would emerge, seeking to avoid alliance with either the United States or the Soviet Union, known as the *third world*. The *third world*, a term that originally referred to those countries that called themselves "nonaligned," meaning nations that actively sought to avoid formal or even informal alignment with either the United States or with the Soviet Union. The Non Aligned Movement was conceived by the leaders of Indonesia (Sikharno), India (Nehru), Ghana (Knrumo), Yugoslavia (Tito), and Egypt (Nasser). Other nations, such as Bolivia and Mongolia, later joined the movement. The third world became known as the Non Aligned Nations," and because of their

comparative lower economic status, as the "developing world." The nations of the developing world sought economic development (which often meant industrialization) while seeking to maintain their own culture and avoid Cold War political alignments. During the Cold War most nations allied themselves with one of these "worlds."

Military Pacts and the Nuclear Arms Race

By 1955 both the United States and the Soviet Union had organized their own multination mutual defense pacts. These organizations were arguably formed to prevent warfare (and perhaps may be considered a success in this sense), but they heightened international tensions and upped the stakes significantly should a war break out between them.

NATO. In 1948, the Soviet Union successfully tested its own atomic weapons. In that same year, the United States and its allies signed the Treaty of Brussels, which resulted in the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. Original nation members of NATO included Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada (although France later withdrew). Military and economic cooperation among the NATO nations increased. The central purpose of NATO was to counter potential armed attacks of Western Europe by the Soviet Union, although the key mutual defense feature of the organization was never invoked during the Cold War. This position may be summarized in the phrase that NATO was created to "keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down." The long-term effects of NATO were primarily economic.

Warsaw Pact

In 1955, the Soviet Union established its own military community, consisting of itself and its central and eastern European allies and satellite nations, called the Warsaw Pact. The founding members of the Warsaw Pact included Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union. The areas of Germany occupied by the Soviet Union (the German Democratic Republic, popularly known in the West as "East Germany") also joined. A central purpose of the Warsaw Pact was to mirror NATO, but in this case under Soviet, rather than American, control. The Warsaw Pact lasted until 1991 when, following the de-establishment of the USSR, it officially disbanded in December of that year.

The Nuclear Arms Race

Many observers thought that the next potential global conflict, popularly called World War III, would begin with the Warsaw Pact nations invading Europe and would feature wide-scale, perhaps even global, nuclear war. The fear of nuclear war formed a central concern during the Cold War. By the end of the 1950s. both superpowers had effectively adopted a military policy known as MAD, or Mutually Assured Destruction. MAD was predicated on the principle that if either nation engaged in a first strike, that is, if they launched a nuclear attack first, there was enough of a nuclear reserve to assure that they too would be destroyed. The effect was to impair the desire to launch such an attack, but it had the additional, and perhaps unanticipated, effect of inducing a nuclear arms race and discouraging disarmament.

In 1964, the United States had about 6,800 nuclear warheads capable of delivering about 7,500 megatons of destruction, whereas the Soviet Union had about 500 warheads capable of

1,000 megatons. By 1982, the United States had about 11,000 warheads capable of nearly 4,100 megatons of destruction, and the Soviet Union had around 10,000 warheads and a destructive capacity of 8,200 megatons (the Soviets had fewer missiles but higher megatonnage). For purposes of reference, a *megaton* is a measure of explosive power equivalent to one million short tons of TNT. Comparisons are made to the destructive power released over more than five years during World War II: twenty megatons is estimated as equivalent in destruction to about 1,540 times the power of all the explosives and weapons used in World War II, including the primitive atomic weapons dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Not only did the number of warheads and their explosive yields increase, but they were deployed in a broader variety of ways. These include, but are by no means limited to, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), which are launched into space and reenter through the atmosphere, striking their target within a few minutes' time; submarine-launched missiles (which provide a mobile nuclear launch platform); and aircraft capable of global deployment. Currently there are perhaps as many as 17,300 nuclear weapons worldwide, and nations known to possess nuclear weapons include the United States, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea. Although there have been a number of Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties (SALT) and discussions, the number of warheads and their yields increased into the twenty-first century, and nuclear proliferation remains a key international and humanitarian challenge. The fact that, at least in some nations, a single individual may launch nuclear weapons is a cause for deep concern among some people. The limitations assumed by the adoption of MAD policies are, arguably, being stretched toward a breaking point.

Other Races

The United States and the Soviet Union fought battles on every conceivable front—in the sciences, in sports, and even sometimes heated competition in culture and the arts.

- *Chess:* In 1972 the world watched as US chess champion Bobby Fischer took on Russian Boris Spassky, as if it were a battle to prove the superiority of the systems that produced the two geniuses. Fischer won and became World Chess Champion.
- *Sports:* When the United States defeated the Soviet Union in hockey in the 1980 Olympics, the event was regarded in the free world as if it were a major military victory. The Soviet team had won four prior consecutive gold medals. The victory was dubbed the "Miracle on Ice." *Sports Illustrated* voted it the greatest moment in sports in the twentieth century.
- *Space:* Although Germany had already designed and deployed the first rockets during World War II, it was the Soviet Union that took the lead in space exploration. In October 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first man-made object to orbit the earth. And if satellites could orbit the earth, so could space-based nuclear weapons, raining death from space. The race for control of space was on. In 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space. President Kennedy responded by challenging the Soviet Union to be the first to take a man to the moon and have him return safely. The space race was on. The United States "won" the space race, putting a man on the moon in 1969. The Soviet Union conducted a scaled-back space program, but the expense of keeping up with the United States in space, militarily, and in other fields proved too great an economic burden. By 1989, the Soviet Union was unable to continue and dissolved in 1989.

- *Music:* Music formed yet another battleground in the Cold War. The Soviet union promoted music and art, because it believed they championed the cause of socialism and countered the decadence of Western music. For its part, the West relished the defection of important Soviet composers and performers. Examples of exiled musicians from the Soviet Union include:

    - *Mstislav Rostropovich (1926–2012, cellist)*. Rostropovich defected from Russia to the United States in 1974, and became the music director/conductor of the US National Symphony Orchestra until 1994.
    - *Vladimir Horowitz (1902–1989, pianist and composer)*. Horowitz stuffed dollars into his shoes for his departure from the Soviet Union in 1925 in order to finance his first concerts in the West, intending never to return to the Soviet Union. During a thaw in the Cold War in the mid-1980s, Horowitz returned to Moscow and Leningrad for a farewell concert in 1986. Although well past his performing prime, the concert was an international event politically and musically. It was broadcast internationally on television and reported on-site in Moscow by CBS correspondent Walter Kuralt.
    - *Van Cliburn, Jr. (1934–2013, pianist)*. Although not a Soviet defector or exile, US pianist Van Cliburn soared to unprecedented fame in the United States when he won the First International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow in 1958, performing Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* and Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 3* to a standing ovation. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was consulted prior to awarding the first prize to Cliburn, and asked the judges, "Is he the best?… Then give him the prize!" The competition was intended to showcase Soviet performers playing Russian music. Instead, Cliburn, in the eyes of many persons in the West, had soundly defeated the Soviets in their own capital, at their own competition, playing perhaps the most famous Russian piano concerti. He returned to a ticker-tape parade in New York City, and a cover of *Time Magazine* proclaimed him "The Texan Who Conquered Russia." His later recording of the Tchaikovsky *Piano Concerto No. 1* became the first classical album to go platinum and was the best-selling classical album for over a decade. The music race was a very serious competition.

Surrogate Wars

The fear of nuclear warfare was so substantial that it made a direct conflict between the superpowers highly undesirable. This, however, did not translate into a lack of conflict, but instead prompted the United States and the Soviet Union to fight each other through surrogates. Of the numerous surrogate conflicts carried on across the globe, this narrative will briefly mention only two: the United States/Vietnam War and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

War in Vietnam (1963–1975)

In the 1950s, the French government had difficulty controlling its colony Indochina (basically what would become Vietnam), and the United States sent assistance to prevent the growth of Communism in the northern portion of Vietnam. During the administration of John F.

Kennedy (1960–63), US involvement was limited, but increasing. Under U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963–68), military involvement in escalated until nearly five hundred thousand American troops were deployed. The US death toll was in the tens of thousands, and pressure was brought to bear to end an unpopular war. The United States withdrew between 1973 and 1975. The United States sustained over three hundred thousand casualties, with fifty-eight thousand dead and two thousand missing in action. The atrocities committed by Americans still haunt many of the Vietnam generation. As many as two and a half million Vietnamese died in the conflict, with millions more wounded. From a US perspective, the Vietnam War was intended to contain the spread of Communism into Southeast Asia. From a Vietnamese perspective, they were seeking to repel foreign occupation and invasion, first by France and then by the United States.

Occupation of Afghanistan (1979–1989)

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 in order to install a communist regime. During the next ten years, guerilla forces attacked the Soviet forces, driving them out in 1989. Afghanistan is often considered the Soviet Union's "Vietnam." When the Soviets withdrew, they left as many as eleven million land mines and millions of refugees. The US-trained guerillas, many embracing modern militant forms of Islam and calling themselves *mujahideen* ("those who wage jihad"), continued to use Afghanistan as a staging ground, but this time for large-scale terrorism. The global effects of the conflict in Afghanistan are not yet fully felt, whether one focuses upon the destabilization and continued human misery caused through Soviet invasion, occupation, and retreat, or one focuses upon US recruitment, arming, and training of global terrorists.

Dissolution of the Soviet Union

The end of the Cold War also marked the end of the world's first communist government. By 1989, the Soviet Union was economically and militarily spent. The last premier, Mikhail Gorbachev, began opening up Soviet society and economics with policies called *perestroika*, involving capitalist economic reform, and *glasnost*, which weakened censorship and opened social and political dialogue that had been allegedly suppressed for decades. In 1989, the Soviet Union became, temporarily, the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). By the mid-1990s, a number of countries emerged from the former Soviet territory. Most of these, including Russia itself, have not fully accommodated to a postcommunist world, and continued unrest and upheaval are likely.

Lessons

Although there were many lessons learned about the destabilizing effects of surrogate wars, and many are yet to be learned, one in particular deserves attention. Inferiorly trained and armed local forces and insurgents handily defeated both the United States and the Soviet Union, the world's superpowers. Guerilla warfare and terrorism have proven highly effective against the world's most developed nations, which had larger populations and better-trained and better-armed troops. The full impact of this lesson is perhaps yet to be felt. Can the militarily and economically advantaged nations of the developed world continue to rely upon economic and

diplomatic hegemony, military tactics and weapons, or arguably outdated Cold War ideologies and weaponry that have been proven of questionable effectiveness, or must these nations engage the rest of the world in new ways?

Legacy of the Cold War

The Cold War has left a deep and lasting global legacy in many ways. One may attempt to understand the contemporary world, but that is impossible without an understanding of the Cold War and its heritage. Here are elements of that heritage:

- inflated nuclear arsenals and continued international proliferation
- global anger and unrest
- distorted political views, dividing the world ideologically and morally into the good guys and the evil guys

As this list illustrates, many ongoing global challenges are associated with the Cold War. Nevertheless, much of contemporary debate over these challenges does not address the underlying Cold War ideologies, policies, and practices that probably underlie these challenges and perhaps promote the continued inability to resolve them.

Conclusion

The two world wars of the twentieth century demonstrated to some people the complete failure of the Enlightenment—meaning that humankind was perhaps unable to govern itself. The subsequent Cold War (1945–1989) was a period of international paranoia and nuclear tensions, resulting from an arguably flawed ideological framework that persists today. During the twentieth century, the most enlightened and prosperous nations in the history of the world demonstrated a bewildering capacity for both barbarism and for humanitarian assistance. This is reflected in the politics, economics, and arts of the twenty-first century.

Part IV

South Asia and East Asia

CHAPTER 12

Classical China

A gentleman makes demands of himself; an inferior man makes demands of others.

Confucius

Is it not sad how we and other things go on stroking or jostling each other, in a race ahead like a gallop which nothing can stop? How can we fail to regret that we labor all our lives without seeing success, wear ourselves out with toil in ignorance of where we shall end…how can we not call this our supreme regret?

Zhuangzi

Introduction

Chinese civilization offers us perhaps the world's oldest continuous culture that spans back over three thousand years. This is not to say that Chinese civilization did not undergo tremendous change – politically, religiously, and culturally – nor is it to say that there was not a wide variety of cultural variation throughout the region. But it is to say that for thousands of years the Chinese have thought of themselves as a cohesive civilization. This is especially true from the founding of the Qin Dynasty under Qin Shihuangdi in 221 BCE. But even before then there was a strong sense of shared identity among those that lived in the geographic region around the Yellow River in the central plains of northern China. That identity has continued more or less intact from the early dynasties to today in a way that no other civilization has accomplished. One of the questions we will want to ask is: what factors helped to create and maintain that sense of identity and continuity that we are now calling Chinese Civilization? As we will come to see, it is a combination of the wide spread adoption of a philosophic-religious identity, a strong emphasis on a shared history, and the continuity provided by a resilient dynastic political cycle.

Civilization in China

The first vestiges of Civilization in East Asia developed along the Yellow River in what is now modern day China. The Yellow River earned its name from the rich deposits of silt that flows in its slow currents. This provides a source of water and fertile soil necessary for agricultural development. There is evidence of a number of Neolithic settlements that developed along this river system.

Two well documented cultures developed around 3000 BCE: the Yangshao and Longshan. Like many pre-literate societies, these two are known primarily through their pottery and other material culture discovered by archeologists. The Yangshao are known by the remnants of their painted pottery. The Longshan are recognized (and named) for their

development of black pottery, they also developed tools and other items out of jade – a very hard mineral that can be polished into a beautiful green hue. From this earliest archeological evidence down through the years, Jade has been treated as a precious stone in East Asia.

The Shang Dynasty

As these Neolithic communities continued to develop, a more complex society began to emerge. Later historical records point to this time from 3000 to around 1500 BCE as the era of the "sage-kings," legendary heroes that exemplified virtuous leadership. These "sage-kings" were attributed with developing the key elements of civilization, from developing agriculture and writing, to taming the floods of the Yellow River that were so detrimental to society. According to native Chinese histories, these early "sage-kings" eventually created a stable government known as the Xia Dynasty that was later supplanted by the Shang Dynasty. While the accounts of these "sage-kings" read more like legends than actual history, they presented an ideal type of a ruler who is virtuous, intelligent, and viewed more as a benevolent father than as a feared tyrant

While many scholars believe that there probably was some form of government that called itself the Xia, no archeological evidence has yet been discovered to definitively corroborate its existence, therefore the historicity of the Xia is still up for debate. Up until recent discoveries, the historicity of the Shang dynasty was also questionable. All of this changed in 1899 during a malaria epidemic. At the time, a popular folk remedy for the illness involved grinding "dragon bones" into powder and used as a medicine. A scholar of ancient Chinese civilization had purchased some of these "dragon bones" to use as a cure; he was stunned to discover what looked like archaic Chinese writing carved into the bones. Tracing the origins of the "dragon bones" to their source led to the discovery and identification of the tombs of thirteen kings of the Shang Dynasty.

These "dragon bones" were actually oracle bones used in the process of divination by the Shang kings. The writings on these oracle bones opened a new chapter of Chinese civilization that had previously been hidden from our view. The inscriptions found on these bones are the earliest evidence of Chinese writing and give us insight into the concerns, religion, rituals, worldview and life of the Shang royal court. In addition to thousands of oracle bones, these tombs also contained sophisticated bronze vessels (some inscribed with descriptions of their purpose and who owned them), hair ornaments, daggers, and other items.

What do the oracle bones and bronze inscriptions tell us about Shang civilization? They indicate that it was a very hierarchical society with a rigid class structure and that the king was both a political and religious leader in a form of theocracy. The oracle bone inscriptions are essentially questions that the king and his advisors asked to the spirits and deceased ancestors. Many of the divinations sought guidance from the spiritual realm on what the king should do in a given situation. They also included wishful predictions and sought to understand the meaning behind natural events: did the spirits cause the crops to fail; was it a dead ancestor causing the king to have a toothache? A question would be inscribed on the bone or tortoise shell. A hole was then drilled into the bone and a hot metal poker would be placed in the hole causing the bone to crack. The king or his advisor would then divine the pattern of the cracks to determine an answer to the question that was asked. A number of the oracle bones include the divined answer, and some even include the actual result of the prognostication.

These inscriptions also give us insight into the Shang concept of the spiritual realm. There are three categories of spiritual beings that could be addressed through divination: royal ancestors, legendary heroes (including the sage-kings), and nature spirits. All of these spiritual beings were under the control of a single high god known as Di or Shangdi (Lord on High). Shangdi was seen as the most powerful of all the spirits, with control over the wind and rain he was the quintessential sky god. He was also viewed as extremely unpredictable and unconcerned with humanity; he made no moral demands and was not particularly benevolent. Because of his status as the ruler of the spirits he was typically beyond direct human contact. Instead, if the Shang kings sought to communicate with Shangdi they were required to ask their immediate ancestors to act as intermediaries. This process of propitiating your own dead ancestors to act on your behalf in approaching Shangdi was formalized in what came to be known as the bin ritual. The bin ritual was performed by offering sacrifice to your immediate ancestors asking them if they will approach the higher deities and request the desired blessing from Shangdi.

The oracle bone inscriptions and the bin ritual indicate that Shang religion employed two primary practices: sacrifice (both human and animal) and divination. There are several characteristics of Shang religion that become indicative of Chinese culture and religion as a whole. First, that the essential concern to this religious worldview was the responsibility to provide for the needs of one's dead ancestors and maintain a relationship with them through ritual sacrifice. Ancestor worship, clearly evidenced from the Shang records, is a custom that has a very long history throughout Chinese civilization. Second, there is a strong emphasis on orthopraxy; what you do in ritual practice was more important than any particular belief or doctrine about Shangdi or the other spirits. Another aspect of Shang religion is the relationship between the social and spiritual hierarchy. Just as the spirit world had its supreme ruler in Shangdi with a number of spirits below him, so too the Shang state had the king with a number of advisors and bureaucrats to support him in his role. And finally, Shang religious practice shows us that the king is responsible for the welfare of the people, essentially acting as the high priest that performs rituals to preserve the state and fulfil the needs of the people.

Zhou Dynasty

The Shang dynasty controlled the territory around the Yellow river in the northern plains starting at around 1600 BCE. By 1045 BCE, a vassal state to the East of the Shang known as the Zhou challenged the Shang court, conquered their capital, and established a new dynasty. We have a number of historical records and documents about the Zhou dynasty that give us insight into their civilization. Perhaps the most famous of these historical sources is the *Shang Shu* (Book of Documents or Book of History) that contain speeches and historical writings some of which are generally accepted to date to the eleventh century BCE. These sources give us a good picture of the Zhou dynasty.

The Zhou worshiped *tian* (Heaven), a benevolent deity that helps the just prevail in worldly affairs. They justified their rebellion from the Shang by claiming that they were immoral, oppressive, and corrupt. Because of this, the Zhou had received the mandate of heaven (*tianming*): the right to rule earned through their virtue. The mandate of heaven thus became the primary political ideology that justified the establishment of a new state; Heaven will only support a ruler who is virtuous and moral.

Three men were credited with establishing the Zhou dynasty and exemplifying what was needed to receive the mandate of heaven. King Wen (the cultured king) embodied the notion of a benevolent ruler concerned with the needs of his people. King Wu (the martial king) was praised for presiding over the defeat of the Shang. And Duke Zhou, who became the embodiment and model of virtuous government service in the Confucian tradition, became distinguished because of his willingness to give up power – rather than take it for himself – and defend his young nephew as king at the death of King Wu. The *Shang Shu* records a number of speeches given by Duke Zhou at the conquest of the Shang (also known as the Yin in this source) in which he argues that he had no desire to rule over them. But, because of the mandate of heaven and Shang corruption, he had no choice but to conquer them. Yet, Duke Zhou displays his virtue by showing mercy to his conquered enemy by promising that if they remain virtuous they would receive land and a place to continue the worship of their ancestors and be allowed to live in peace.

This promise indicates the decentralized political system established under the Zhou rulers. Rather than establish a strong central government with direct control over every aspect of the kingdom, the Zhou divided the kingdom into various tributary states, each of which were then governed by a local prince that continued ties with the central court. Many of these local rulers had strong family or military ties to the Zhou dynasty. While this form of decentralized government was seen as optimal for controlling a geographically large and diverse population, the ultimate result was that the dynasty devolved into a number of competing feudal states. The central Zhou court eventually became a powerless figurehead. Though the Zhou dynasty continued for several centuries, despite a number of rebellions, by around 475 BCE the vassal states were essentially independent kingdoms – each seeking domination over the other. Chinese civilization descended into an era known as the warring states period: two centuries of virtually non-stop war between ruling warlords seeking to take control of the Zhou dynasty.

This period of war had a profound effect on Chinese civilization. The resulting social instability, economic upheaval, and political insecurity spurred the development of a number of new ideas to resolve the conflict. The warring states era, despite the turmoil (or perhaps because of it), became one of the most intellectually creative periods in Chinese history as a number of thinkers sought solutions to the problems facing society. These became known as the Hundred Schools of Thought. And while there are a number of different traditions that developed in this time period, two rose to prominence and became practically synonymous with Chinese Civilization: Confucianism and Daoism. As these two traditions are profoundly influential in our understanding of later developments in Chinese civilization we must be sure to gain a solid footing in both before moving forward.

Confucianism

Confucius (a Latinized version of the Chinese name: Kongfuzi) lived from 551 - 479 BCE and witnessed the decline of Zhou Dynasty into the chaos of the Warring States Period. Confucius argued that the solution to the current social breakdown in society was a return to the golden age of the early Zhou Dynasty. He viewed himself not as an innovator of new ideas but as a restorer of past ideals. And how was one to understand what made the Zhou so great? Through reading the historical texts and reinstituting the ritual actions modeled by the virtuous rulers that had created the Dynasty in the first place. This return to traditional ritual would restore order in society.

There are a number of ideas that Confucius presented as typical of the ideal state. In essence, his philosophy was based upon the need for human virtue and morality. A peaceful state required a virtuous society and a virtuous society required proper moral action from its individual members. The essential characteristic, then, that all members of society must cultivate is what he called *ren* (仁). Often translated as humaneness or reciprocity, *ren* refers to the feeling of kindness and empathy that ought to exist between two people. This virtue is inherently possessed by everyone but it must be constantly cultivated through the performance of *li* (禮) – ritual action.

For Confucius, *li* was not just the special ritual sacrifices offered to one's ancestors. It included any form of ritual action and interaction that was designed to create a harmonious society. Thus, the proper treatment of one's parents, other family members, and government official in everyday actions was essential to the practice of *li*. Confucius argued that ritual action develops a person's empathetic humaneness and strengthened human relationships. Confucius taught that there are five primary relationships that all individuals in society are a part of.

- Ruler – Subject
- Husband – Wife
- Father – Son
- Elder Brother – Young Brother
- Friend – Friend

As each individual learned to engage in the proper ritual for each of these relationships they cultivate the natural feeling of kindness that ought to exist between each group. The ritual interaction of these five relationships also created an organized and hierarchical social structure where everyone knew their place and the role that they were to play. The result would be a peaceful and harmonious society.

The burden of responsibility for the performance of *li* and the cultivation of *ren* ultimately rested on each individual. But the ruler carried a unique role by modeling virtuous behavior for his subjects. Confucius called this the *rectification of names*. By this he means that each individual will act in reality what he claims to be in title. That is, a ruler will act like a true and virtuous ruler rather than engage in self-indulgence or despotism. A father will take care of his family rather than act as a tyrant. Rectification of names becomes Confucius' method for ensuring that reality matched the ideal. This was, in part, a call to obey the letter of the ritual in the pursuit of fulfilling the true measure of the spirit of the ritual. Note here that the ritual was efficacious not because it influenced Heaven or the spirits but because it was socially beneficial by developing individual characteristics and social relationships.

For Confucius, the very breakdown of society that was emblematic of the Warring States period was the distance between the title that rulers claimed and the action that they displayed. This breakdown in the social structure could only be corrected when the ruler engaged in proper ritual action and thus model virtue for his subject to follow. This creates a reciprocal but rigid hierarchical social structure. When the ruler is righteous the people are righteous; when he is evil his subjects are evil. As Confucius explains:

"To rule (政) is to set things straight (正). If you lead by setting yourself straight, who would dare to not set themselves straight?"

This is not to be understood as a coercive form of government. Confucius is not arguing that a ruler should force the people to be virtuous. Rather, he argues that the only true ruler is one who is so virtuous the people can't help but follow him. As an individual cultivates themselves through proper ritual (*li*) with true humaneness and sincerity (*ren*) then he can become a *junzi* (君子): a gentleman-sage. A *junzi* is one who is worthy of receiving the mandate of heaven and thus the right to rule. By cultivating his students into gentlemen, Confucius was seeking to create a form of government that could overcome the evil and immoral rulers that were the cause of the Warring States period and return Chinese civilization to its past glory. The model for the Confucian *junzi* was Duke Zhou who exhibited his willingness to serve the state and sacrificed his own ambition for the good of the people as discussed above. Again, Confucius explains this quite clearly:

"A gentleman (*junzi*) makes demands on himself; an inferior man makes demands on others."

The cultivation of the *junzi* through ritual and humaneness required an exhaustive education. Indeed, the emphasis on education becomes one of the hallmarks of the Confucian tradition. Since he failed to gain employment as a government official, Confucius essentially retired as a private teacher that would accept students from any background as long as they showed promise. Anyone could cultivate the moral virtue needed to be a gentleman, regardless of status or background.

While Confucius appeared to unsuccessfully influence Chinese thought during his lifetime, his teachings eventually became the bedrock of the Chinese political ideology and culture from the Han dynasty (ca. 200 BCE) to modern times. A number of later thinkers, such as Mencius and Xunzi, continued to develop Confucian thought and preserve the tradition for later generations. It is safe to say that Confucianism is the most important and influential element of Chinese civilization as it has molded not just the thought and culture of China, but all of East Asian Civilization. Yet, Confucianism was not the only school of thought from this time period. Another tradition, developed shortly after Confucius, would have almost as much of an influence in Chinese civilization—only in a different direction. This tradition is Daoism, as exemplified by the philosopher Zhuangzi.

Daoism

The origins of the Daoist tradition are somewhat lost in the fog of history. The tradition itself tends to trace its origins to two primary figures: Laozi and Zhuangzi. This form of early Daoist thought is often referred to as Lao-Zhuang philosophy. Laozi is traditionally considered the founder of Daoist thought and the author of the famous *Dao De Jing* – a cryptic text of short aphorisms and sayings. The historical reality of Laozi is greatly doubted but that doesn't negate the actual historical influence that the character of Laozi had on Chinese civilization. In reality though, Daoism more than likely started as a loosely related group of different thinkers, authors, and texts who shared similar ideas and thoughts about a variety of topics. It was only several centuries after Laozi and Zhuangzi were said to have lived that Chinese historians postulated a school of thought that is now termed as Daoism. While Laozi is most usually associated with the founding of Daoism, it is in the writings of Zhuangzi that we find the most comprehensive

rebuttal to the teachings of Confucius and positing of alternative solutions to the problems facing individuals in the Warring States period.

Little is known about the Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi. He is dated to the fourth century BCE and clearly lived after Confucius since he constantly criticizes his teachings throughout his writings. Historical sources claim that he was a minor official who declined the offer to become prime minister to retain his freedom. His writings are characterized by fantastical stories, tongue-in-cheek jokes, and witty anecdotes involving everyday events and people designed to force the reader to question their basic assumptions of the world around them. He is particularly critical of Confucianism and the other schools of thought at the time that were seeking a political solution to the warring states. For Zhuangzi, a political answer to a political problem will only create more politics and never resolve the real issues facing society. What is needed is a broader and clearer perspective of the world and humanity's place within it.

To help us gain that clearer perspective, Zhuangzi makes a distinction between petty knowledge and great knowledge. Petty knowledge designates understanding that is limited in scope and stuck in the particulars of language and events. It is a form of tunnel vision where the individual is unable or unwilling to look at the world from a different view. Instead, they get caught up in the details of the moment and are incapable of breaking out the chains of habit and tradition. Zhuangzi is particularly critical of those who get caught up in petty arguments of language and definition and seek to create rigid rules for every aspect of human action.

On the other hand, great knowledge designates understanding that is free flowing and broad in scope. It moves beyond language into actual experience and allows an individual to see the world from a broad perspective as it really is, not as they want to make it. Someone who engages in great knowledge can see the limits of individual traditions – such as Confucianism – and move past those constraints and operate freely in the world. Zhuangzi's writings are noted for intentionally playing with language to force the reader to see things from a new perspective, thus allowing them to expand their view from petty limits to a greater understanding.

For Zhuangzi, the goal of seeking great knowledge is union with the *Dao* (道). While its literal meaning is "the way" or "path", Zhuangzi conceives of the *Dao* as the power that unites and controls all existence. It is the flow of the universe; the natural, spontaneous, and eternal way of all things. It is not a being, as conceived in many poly- and monotheistic traditions, but a monism; a unifying force that guides all existence. It is neither benevolent nor dualistic. But it is both transcendent and immanent – meaning that while it transcends the ordinary world it can also be found within each individual. It is also in a state of constant flux, an ever proceeding flow of events and change – symbolized by the transition of the seasons in the natural world. And just as the *Dao* is manifest through the changes of the seasons, it should be manifest in people as well through a free flow from moment to moment rather than a staunchly rigid set of rules and regulations controlling human behavior.

Zhuangzi conceives of the problem of the warring states as a consequence of people getting caught up in petty knowledge and failing to see the bigger picture of the world around them. This limitation in our perspective and understanding causes us to act contrary to the *Dao* and results in the current social upheaval as everyone chases their own ambitions rather than understanding and uniting with the reality that is the *Dao*.

So what is to be done? Zhuangzi urges his reader to incorporate four characteristics that will allow for a union with the *Dao* and result in harmony between the individual and the world.

Usefulness of uselessness: If the fundamental problem of the political system of Zhuangzi's day is rigid adherence to the rules of various schools of thought – as exemplified by the teachings of Confucius – then the solution is to refuse to play by those rules. When we limit ourselves to following an arbitrary set of man-made laws and regulations then we limit our capacity as human beings, particularly if those laws create a contradiction with the natural flow of the *Dao*. Such rules are the epitome of petty knowledge and limited perspective. For Zhuangzi, those that unthinkingly follow the teachings of Confucianism accomplish nothing but to wear themselves out by trying to be 'useful' in all the wrong ways. He argues, "In our strife and friction with other things, we gallop forward on our course unable to stop. Is this not sad? We toil our whole life without seeing any results. We deplete ourselves with wearisome labor, but don't know what it all adds up to. Isn't this lamentable?"[1]

Fasting of the mind: Since following the artificial rules of systems like Confucianism are futile, what is a person to do? How can he productively do anything? Zhuangzi argues that before any action can be taken one must first achieve unity with The Way. This is accomplished through the process of fasting of the mind, a meditative practice wherein the individual ceases thought, a form of apophatic mysticism wherein there is a negation of thought in order to achieve a higher state of consciousness. Once emptied of thought, the mind becomes an open vessel that can then be filled with the *Dao*. It is through this practice that harmony with the *Dao* is achieved. This union thus enables the practitioner to engage with the world in a more purposeful and useful way.

The focus on the negation of thoughts in the mind emphasizes Zhuangzi's concern with arbitrary dualities and selfish ambitions. Zhuangzi argues that all dualities are based on perspective and that the reality of the *Dao* is that it is in and around all things. Thus, speaking about dualities is to deny the reality of the universal nature of the *Dao* and ensnares people into a limited view of the world around them. When our mind gets caught in the trap of ambition, desire, and dualistic thinking we limit our perspective. This is a form of relativism: an acknowledgment that such things as 'this' and 'that' or 'good' and 'evil' are dependent upon individual context and the needs of the moment. What is required, then, is the stilling of these thoughts and ideas so that the *Dao* can find place to work within us.

Transformation of things: As union with the *Dao* is achieved, personal ambitions and desires fall away. We no longer seek to follow our own path but to go with the flow of the *Dao*. With this unity comes transformation. We have already noted that the *Dao* is in a state of constant change and motion – this is evidenced by nature itself. If such is the case, then it also requires those who seek and have found union with The Way to engage in that same change and motion. This is in contradistinction to the teachings of Confucius that argues for strict observance to the unchanging laws of ritual action. For Zhuangzi, such unwillingness to transform and change as the situation and need requires it results in the disruption of the *Dao*. Instead, one should accept change as it comes and move freely along with such transformations because it maintains harmony with the *Dao* and results in peace.

Perfection of skill: Union with the *Dao* results in the perfection of skill; the capacity to act in complete harmony with the power of the Way. Such perfection of skill is portrayed by

[1] Victor Mair. *Wandering on the Way*, 14.

Zhuangzi in the famous story of Cook Ding, a master chef who is praised by the king for his skill in cutting up an ox. Cook Ding replies,

> *"What your servant loves is the Way, which goes beyond mere skill. When I first began to cut oxen, what I saw was nothing but whole oxen….Today, I meet the ox with my spirit rather than looking at it with my eyes. My sense organs stop functioning and my spirit moves as it pleases….I've been using my cleaver for nineteen years and have cut up thousands of oxen with it, but the blade is still as fresh as though it had just come from the grindstone….Nonetheless, whenever I come to a complicated spot and see that it will be difficult to handle, I cautiously restrain myself, focus my vision, and slow my motion. With an imperceptible movement of the cleaver, plop! and the flesh is already separated, like a clump of earth collapsing to the ground. I stand there holding the cleaver in my hand, look all around me with complacent satisfaction, then I wipe off the cleaver and store it away"*[2]

What the story of Cook Ding illustrates is that union with the *Dao* provides the capacity for the perfection of skill. This perfection arises not because of our own desire, or following a set of rules, but because the *Dao* guides the individual so that the "spirit moves as it pleases" rather than relying upon our limited sense organs. The *Dao De Jing* discusses a related idea called *wu-wei* (無爲) which is often translated too literally as "non-action." Such a translation misses the true meaning and intent behind such an idea. *Wu-wei* is better understood as not engaging in any action that is contrary to the *Dao*. The perfection of skill and *wu-wei*, rather than being a philosophy of inaction (as it is often accused of), is a philosophy of intentionally directed action—undertaking action only when in harmony and union with the *Dao*. If each individual were to act in such harmony with the *Dao* then true and lasting peace would be achieved.

Zhuangzi's concern is with the individual and his relationship with the *Dao*. Later texts and philosophers, such as the *Huainanzi* and the *Guanzi*, incorporate these and similar ideas into a political ideology designed for a king to utilize in state rule. Yet, despite the efforts of both Daoist and Confucian philosophers, neither school proved successful in solving the warring states problem. That honor belongs to the school of thought known as Legalism and the particular ruthlessness and skill of China's first emperor: Qin Shi Huangdi.

Unification of China

In 221 BCE Qin Shi Huangdi brought an end to the warring states and unified china under a single imperial ruler. Compared to the previous two hundred years of war, the rise of the Qin state and its complete domination of the region was sudden and decisive. How was it accomplished? We can point to four elements that allowed the Qin state to rise to power.

First, the Qin government engaged in a massive redistribution of land. The government took control of the land from the wealthy elite and distributed it to any in the lower peasant class that were willing to farm it. This redistribution had several positive effects for the government. It encouraged migration to the region as land could now be owned by the peasant, and a larger

[2] Mair, 26 – 27.

population base meant more soldiers. It also dramatically increased the taxable population and thus increased revenue for the government.

Second, the structure of the bureaucracy and military was reorganized from a hereditary system to a meritocracy. No longer would lazy or inept officials and generals be allowed to maintain their position simply because they had inherited it. Instead, the most able and qualified would rise through the ranks, regardless of birth or education. This ensured the highest quality of leadership – particularly important for the military.

Third, all resources of the state were focused towards maintaining and improving the military. With an increase in population and taxation there would be an increase in conscriptions. The bulk of state revenue was devoted to funding the military and the numerous campaigns fought against the other states. In short, Qin became a military state devoted to total war.

Finally, all of these regulations were implemented by a strict adherence to a political ideology called legalism. Several rulers had utilized this form of government throughout the warring states period. Under Qin Shi Huang it was brutally implemented to great success.

Legalism is a philosophy that developed over several centuries and implemented in a number of states. Its basic premise can be summarized by the quote of one of the early Legalist thinkers, Lord Shang: "In applying punishments, light offenses should be punished heavily; if light offenses do not appear, heavy offenses will not come." If states implemented laws and strictly enforced them then social order would naturally arise and the ruler would have complete control to establish a new unified dynasty. In order to maintain that control it was essential to create such harsh punishments that no one would dare to break the law.

Legalism views human nature as essentially base and selfish, and that is the cause for the breakdown of society. Therefore, through the implementation of a strict legal code and harsh punishments the government will be able to control that selfish human nature and force it to be good.

Han Feizi was a philosopher that most eloquently synthesized various strands of Legalist thought into a comprehensive argument. Since human nature is inherently evil the only thing that will persuade one to do right is the promise of reward and the threat of punishment. His writings are distinctly Machiavellian in nature. Rule by law is the only way for a king to maintain power and ensure that others are not able to take it away. This includes constant supervision of every aspect of government to ensure that no one is plotting against you and punishing entire families or villages for failing to report friends and neighbors who break the law.

Han Feizi's form of legalism was utilized by the State of Qin to gain dominance of the remaining kingdoms. With the unification of China in 221 BCE, Qin Shi Huangdi declared himself emperor and established the first Chinese Dynasty organized around a strong centralized government, setting a model for succeeding dynasties up to the modern period.

Qin Shi Huangdi was not only a skilled general; he was also a brilliant and dedicated, though brutal, ruler. Under his rule he quickly moved to standardize numerous elements of Chinese culture to unify the various states. This included standardizing weights, measures, currency, and – most importantly – the writing system. This allowed for easy transportation, trade, and communication across the breadth of the empire and forced the people in the recently conquered states to conform to the rule of the new emperor.

While the new empire was solidifying its rule, its new emperor was increasingly becoming obsessed with securing his own immortality. Qin Shi Huangdi began searching for a magic elixir said to grant eternal life. At the same time he expended vast resources to create a tomb complex and ensure that he would be taken care of in the next life should he die. The result

is the famous tomb that includes the terra-cotta warriors discovered in the 1970's near modern day Xi'an.

Qin Shi Huangdi died in 211 BCE. In his ten years as emperor he had unified China under a strong centralized imperial structure and standardized essential elements within society to ensure uniformity. Accomplishing this required harsh measures and strict laws. Not all were happy with his rule. In a famous episode, later historians wrote that 460 Confucian scholars were buried alive after criticizing the emperor. The government also attempted to burn all non-legalist writing in the empire. Regardless of whether this story is accurate or not, it displays later attitudes towards the Qin Dynasty as particularly ruthless. And so it is no wonder that shortly after the emperor's death rebellion broke out and a new dynasty was established. Yet, it is also accurate to say that the short time that Qin Shi Huangdi was in power he exerted an enormous influence on the development of Chinese civilization.

Han Dynasty

With the disintegration of the Qin Dynasty and open rebellion by those who rejected the harsh punishments imposed by legalism, a new ruler rose to power and established a new empire. Liu Bang, later to become Emperor Gao Zu, was from a humble peasant background. However, his skill as a general allowed him to overcome the other claimants to the throne and declare himself emperor of the Han Dynasty in 206 BCE with a new capital in the city of Chang'an. Although it officially rejected legalism as a state ideology, the Han Dynasty came to adopt many of the government structures and legal precedents established by the Qin. In the place of legalism the government eventually came to adopt Confucianism as the state-sponsored ideology and established the teachings of Confucian scholars as the ideal for which the government should strive.

Perhaps the greatest exemplar of these Confucian ideals during the Han dynasty can be found in the scholar-historian Sima Qian (ca. 145 – 86 BCE). A high official in the Han court, Sima Qian defended a general who was erroneously accused of treason. Because of palace intrigue, Sima Qian was sentenced to death or castration. Though many expected him to honorably accept death, he instead chose to suffer the humiliation of castration so that he could complete his great work: *Records of the Grand Historian*. He wrote a letter to his friend Ren An explaining his decision:

> *"Though I might be weak and cowardly and seek shamelessly to prolong my life, yet I know full well the difference between what ought to be followed and what rejected….But the reason I have not refused to bear these ills and have continued to live, dwelling in vileness and disgrace without taking my leave, is that I grieve that I have things in my heart which I have not been able to express fully, and I am shamed to think that after I am gone my writing will not be known to posterity. Too numerous to record are the men of ancient times who were rich and noble and whose names have yet vanished away. It is only those who were masterful and sure, the truly extraordinary men, who are still remembered….I wished to examine into all that concerns heaven and man, to penetrate the changes of the past and present, completing all as the work of one family. But before I had finished my rough manuscript, I met with this calamity. It is because I regretted that it had not been completed that I submitted to the extreme penalty without rancor. When I have truly completed this work, I shall deposit it in the Mountain of Fame. If it may be*

handed down to men who will appreciate it, and penetrate to the villages and great cities, then, though I should suffer a thousand mutilations, what regret should I have?

Records of the Grand Historian has become the single greatest and most revered history written in China. It established the standard by which all later histories were written throughout Chinese civilization. Throughout the text, Sima Qian proffers an interpretation of proper Confucian behavior to serve as a model for future generations to follow. Not only did his writing express such values, but his very life and willingness to stand up to the Emperor to defend what he believed in – at great personal cost – became the ideal for subsequent Confucian government officials.

Shortly after the establishment of the Han Dynasty, the government was met with a number of outside threats. Foremost among these was the continual invasion by a coalition of nomadic tribes from central Asia called the Xiongnu. These nomads were known for their mastery of horse and bow and the mobility that this offered their armies were difficult for the Han military to defend against. In response to the incursions by the Xiongnu, the Han court tried to appease the nomads by bribing them with lavish gifts of silk, jade, gold, and even offering princesses in marriage. Eventually the Xiongnu coalition disintegrated and the Han state more securely established its borders. But the numerous gifts of silk and jade had begun to travel through central Asia eventually reaching India, Persia and Rome. This sparked the beginnings of trade along what eventually became known as the Silk Road.

Lasting for four hundred years, the Han established the imperial pattern of Dynastic succession. They also solidified the norm of a centralized bureaucratic state ruled by law based upon Confucian ideals. The Han Dynasty was so successful in uniting Chinese civilization and culture that its very name came to identify Chinese ethnicity. With the establishment of a stable society trade began to flourish between East Asia, South Asia, and the West by means of the Silk Road. Along this route came not only wealth but the movement of new ideas and technology. Among these, one new idea was introduced towards the end of the Han Dynasty that would forever change Chinese civilization: Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Period of Disunity – The Six Dynasties

With the death of the last Han emperor in 220 CE, China fell into a period of disunion. The Han Dynasty was divided into three separate kingdoms (Shu, Wei, and Wu). This period in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the great Han dynasty provides the background for the famous Chinese novel, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and is often referred to as the period of disunity or the Six Dynasties period (220 – 589 BCE). It was a time of immense social turmoil as various groups vied for control over the land in an attempt to reestablish a new dynasty. Though many kingdoms rose after the Han collapsed it would be another three hundred years before China was again unified under a strong centralized empire. Yet, as we saw during the Warring States Period, this time of political and social turmoil also proved ripe ground for new ideas and cultural growth.

Without strong central bureaucratic control of the region the lack of governmental regulation allowed trade to flourish – with new trade routes and interaction between the East and West continually developing. Indeed, through this time period the Chinese favored exotic foreign goods and were open to the new ideas and cultures that came with them. Part of this openness

can be viewed as a crisis of confidence. With the fall of the Han Dynasty many of the elite and intellectuals of Chinese society began to question the validity of Confucian ideology as a legitimate basis for government. This trial of faith was exacerbated by the clear lack of morality and virtue expressed in the current political turmoil. As society continued to devolve into an ever more cynical quest for power among the different kingdoms seeking control, the educated elites tended to withdraw more and more from government and Confucian principles as they sought for alternative ideologies. These scholars began to draw more heavily on the writings of Daoism, particularly from *Zhuangzi* and the *Daodejing*. Yet, increasingly, a foreign philosophy also began to take hold in Chinese intellectual and religious life.

Buddhism was first introduced into China sometime during the first century of the Common Era. Details are somewhat sketchy but references are made in the imperial records of the late Han Dynasty to various feasts and sacrifices involving Buddhist figures. We also see early artistic evidence of Buddhism in cliff carvings and tombs from this period. Yet, it is not until after the fall of the Han Dynasty and the period of disunion that we see Buddhism fully come into her own on Chinese soil.

While Mainstream Buddhism (as talked about in the chapter on South Asia) became increasingly influential and accepted in South Asia, it was a minority offshoot of the mainstream tradition that succeeded in the Far East. Mahayānā Buddhism (literally meaning the Great Vehicle) probably formed sometime around the first century BCE in South Asia, where it was a controversial and sometimes persecuted movement within the broader Buddhist tradition. By the period of the Six Dynasties, Mahāyāna Buddhism was the predominant form of Buddhist practice in China and still remains so today. How does Mahāyāna differ from the mainstream tradition?

An alternate name for Mahāyāna Buddhism is bodhisattvayāna: the bodhisattva vehicle. A bodhisattva is a being seeking supreme enlightenment – to become a Buddha himself. You will remember that the Buddha awoke to the reality of the four noble truths and then taught that truth to his disciples. Any of his disciples that gained their own realization of that truth and freed themselves from the three poisons of desire, delusion, and hatred would achieve the status of an arhat and obtain nirvāṇa – an end to suffering. Followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism made a distinction between the supreme enlightenment of a Buddha and the escape from saṃsāra of an arhat. When one attains the status of a Buddha, they don't just achieve nirvāṇa – they achieve omniscience and omnipotence. They gain the ultimate capacity to help others achieve enlightenment through their power and understanding that will allow them to teach others the path to enlightenment. A bodhisattva, then, is one who is on the path to becoming a Buddha rather than just seeking escape from suffering as an arhat.

With this shift in focus, from merely escaping saṃsāra to achieving supreme enlightenment, came new scriptures that reflected this new goal. At the heart of this new teaching was an emphasis on the compassion of the Buddha and his willingness to do, say, or suffer anything to help other living beings escape the cycle of rebirth. Because of a Buddha's insight and understanding, he is able to skillfully use any means necessary to help others achieve enlightenment. It is this compassion and willingness to suffer that sets the bodhisattva apart from other more ordinary disciples. A bodhisattva, rather than seeking escape from saṃsāra as soon as possible, is willing to endure reincarnation over and over again to perfect their virtues and understanding to the level of a Buddha.

As Buddhism arrived in China in the first century CE there were a number of challenges to its acceptance by the people. First and foremost was the problem of language. The Buddhist

scriptures arriving in China were from a variety of South Asian languages, from Sanskrit and Pali to Gāndhārī and other vernacular Middle Indo-Aryan languages (often referred to awkwardly as Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit or prakrits), all of which are radically different from Chinese. The process of translation was laborious, involving translation by committee as both foreigners and natives worked together with bilingual intermediaries. The results were often less than desirable. But not only did you have the challenge of language you had the barrier of understanding. Even if you could provide a perfect linguistic translation of Buddhist scriptures you still have the challenge that the very fundamental elements of South Asian philosophy such as saṃsāra, karma, dharma, and atman had no functional equivalent in Chinese thought. So not only do you have to translate the words, you also have to translate the ideas.

Another challenge that faced Buddhists in China was the vast number of scriptures that were flooding into the region along the Silk Road. During the period of disunion and beyond, thousands of Buddhist scriptures and literary texts were translated into Chinese – perhaps the greatest translation project in history. The challenge was that over six hundred years' worth of intellectual and sectarian development was being introduced to China roughly all at once. How could one make sense of the overwhelming variety and seeming contradiction between the different ideas that had developed in South Asia over a prolonged period of time? One response was to focus on the ability of the Buddha to teach according to his audience's need. This was referred to as skillful means which allowed the Buddha to employ any technique – even lie if necessary – to help his audience on their path to enlightenment. The explanation for why the Buddha would say one thing in one text but something very contradictory in another was that the Buddha was teaching to the capacity of the audience at the time – he was telling them what they needed to hear at that moment to raise them to the next level in their understanding. With this strategy in place, it was therefore possible to rank the texts into a sort of hierarchy with the most basic introductory teachings of Mainstream Buddhism at the bottom and the sublime truths of Mahāyāna Buddhism at the top.

To make the teachings of the Buddha more accessible to their audience, Buddhist monks and translators often turned to the teachings of Daoism for rough equivalents in which they could present these new ideas, with mixed results. Daoists were generally positive towards Buddhist teachings in this early stage of transmission as they saw Buddhism as a kindred teaching that offered new methods for cultivation and meditation. Confucianism, on the other hand, was highly critical of Buddhist teachings for three particular reasons. First, they were against the idea of the celibate monk. They felt it displayed a lack of filial piety and contradicted the importance of family relationships so essential to Confucian teachings. Second, they argued that the creation of a community of monks (saṅgha) outside secular authority disrupted the socio-political order. Could society really maintain itself if an entire group of people could existed outside of direct political control? And finally, there was no mention of the Buddha in the classic Confucian texts. It was a foreign religion and therefore barbaric and uncultured.

Regardless of these critiques, Buddhism became more accepted throughout Chinese society, particularly among the educated elite who increasingly became disillusioned with the efficacy of Confucianism. As the social upheaval of the Six Dynasties period continued, Buddhism increasingly flourished. The intellectual interaction between different Buddhist sects, Daoism, and Confucianism also allowed members of these traditions to redefine themselves for the needs of a Chinese population. This led to the continued development of a number of different schools of thought within Chinese Buddhism. Two of the most important schools are Pure Land and Chan (Zen) Buddhism, both of which are still extremely popular and influential in

modern East Asia today. For the purposes of this chapter we will focus on Pure Land Buddhism as an example of these developments in Chinese history.

Pure Land Buddhism seeks to address a number of problems that arise as a result of the shift in emphasis to the bodhisattva path. It was well established from the beginning of Buddhism that there can only be one Buddha on the earth at a time. And a new Buddha cannot be born until the teachings of the previous Buddha disappear from the earth first. So what happens to all of these bodhisattvas that are seeking to become Buddhas? Do they just wait around for their turn? Pure Land teaches that rather than waiting to be reborn on this earth as a Buddha advanced bodhisattvas can create their own world – called pure lands – over which they then preside as a Buddha. This greatly increases the number of worlds and Buddhas that can exist at the same time. A logical continuation of this notion then states that if there are an infinite number of worlds with infinite numbers of Buddhas in them is it not possible for people on this earth to worship them and receive their aid? This is even more enticing when you consider that the Buddha of this world, Siddhartha Gautama (often referred to in Buddhist scriptures as Śakyamuni – sage of the Śakya clan), has already passed out of this world and entered nirvāṇa and is therefore no longer available to supplicate for aid.

The practice of Nianfo (念佛) – mindful recollection of the Buddha – became the key to allow a devotee to form a bond with a Buddha from a Pure Land. There are two basic aspects to Nianfo practice: meditation on a Buddha and his Pure Land, and the chanting of the name of that particular Buddha. The Buddha Amitabha, one of a number of new Buddhas that arose in the Mahāyāna tradition and who resides in a Pure Land beyond our world far to the West, became the most popular object of Nianfo practice in China, and still is today. Throughout many Buddhist temples in modern China you can still hear the recitation of Amitabha Buddha's name: namo a-mi-tuo-fo (南無阿彌陀佛) – homage to Amitabha Buddha. Those who engaged in Nianfo practice and chanted the name of Amitabha Buddha were not only seeking Amitabha's blessing and aid in this life, they were ultimately seeking a place in his Pure Land in their next rebirth. Once reborn in his Pure Land there would be nothing to hinder a devotee's accelerated progress on the bodhisattva path towards Buddhahood.

Nianfo practice is just one of any number of developments that reflect the vast change that occurred within Mahāyāna practice as it developed in China compared to mainstream Buddhism in South Asia. It is during the Six Dynasties period that Buddhism flourished, probably due, in part, to the social upheaval and lack of a strong central government that could have more readily regulated the new tradition as it established roots in the region. Buddhism found great favor among the educated gentry class who were increasingly disillusioned with traditional Chinese thought and were more willing to accept competing ideologies. By the time that China was again unified under a strong ruler in the short-lived Sui Dynasty, immediately proceeded by the golden-age of the Tang Dynasty, Buddhism had already become an integral aspect of Chinese civilization.

Sui and Tang Dynasties – The Golden Age of Classical China

A number of smaller kingdoms and dynasties competed for rule throughout the period of disunity. The ever-changing political boundaries eventually shifted into a distinct North-South orientation. The South was the bastion of traditional Chinese elite culture while the North was often under Non-Chinese Turkic and Mongolian rulers that led to intermingling between the

different cultures. In 581 CE the Sui dynasty was founded in the North and through a quick campaign they seized and utterly destroyed the Southern Capital, at what is now modern day Nanjing. This once again reunified China under a central government. Symbolic of this new reunification is the Grand Canal that was completed under the Sui dynasty by 611 CE. The world's longest manmade waterway, the Grand Canal links the Southern Yangzi River with the Northern Yellow River and was integral in developing an economically and culturally united dynasty by supporting easier trade and movement between North and South China.

Despite the rapid rise of the Sui Dynasty and its success in completing the Grand Canal, it was a short lived government. Much of this can be attributed to overreach on the part of the Empire trying to take more than it could control. Through a series of military campaigns far to the South (into modern day Vietnam), North against the Turko-Mongolian tribes, and North East against Korea, the government stretched itself too thin and caused resentment among the people that bore the burden of the government's ambition. A number of rebellions broke out and by 618 CE the Tang dynasty was founded by Li Yuan, a distant cousin of the Sui Emperor.

Li Yuan ruled for only a few years. In 626 CE one of his sons assassinated his two brothers and forced him to abdicate and ascended to the throne as emperor Taizong. Despite the bloody and brutal manner of his taking over the Tang dynasty, Emperor Taizong is often recognized as one of the greatest rulers in Chinese history and helped usher in what is considered the golden age of Chinese cultural development.

The new Emperor's reign is marked by a distinct effort to rule through fair and just application of law and a reliance upon worthy and honorable administrators in the government. This law code was later adopted by both the Koreans and Japanese and illustrates part of the great influence that the Tang dynasty had in the development of other East Asia cultures through the dissemination of Confucianism, Buddhism, and literature.

During the Tang Dynasty the examination system for selecting government officials that had been in place in previous dynasties was greatly expanded upon. These examinations came to include oral examinations and the writing of poetry, as well as mathematics, law, and calligraphy. By passing the various exams, a successful candidate became part of the government bureaucracy and an extremely revered and influential member of society. While the examinations were ostensibly open to all levels of society, the system greatly favored those from elite backgrounds from around the capital in Chang'an.

The early Tang dynasty, like the Sui before them, continued an aggressive expansion into the surrounding regions. They were particularly successful in their expansion towards the Northwest regions into Central Asia along the Silk Road trade routes. This expansion both cultivated and satiated an intense demand and interest in exotic foreign goods. This demand for foreign cultures was both material and intellectual in nature. Foreign modes of dress and hairstyle became extremely popular as did foreign foods, literature, and ideas. The capital city of Chang'an was particularly notable for its extreme cosmopolitanism. A walk through the city would reveal not just traditional Chinese venues but new temples and houses of worship from traditions such as Zoroastrianism and Nestorian Christianity. But it was Buddhism in particular that seemed to absolutely thrive during the rule of Tang Taizong and succeeding emperors. This is particularly evident in the life of one particular Buddhist pilgrim by the name of Xuanzang.

Xuanzang (602 – 664 CE) travelled throughout China in an effort to collect the sacred texts of Buddhism. As he became aware that a number of Buddhist texts were not available in Chinese translation he decided to go on a pilgrimage to India in search of scriptures that he could bring back with him. Xuanzang spent roughly seventeen years traveling through Central and

South Asia before returning back to the capital city. He kept a detailed record of his travels that describe a number of Buddhist site and catalogued his adventures including traversing some of the most inhospitable land on the planet. During his travels in South Asia, Xuanzang mastered the classical language of Sanskrit in which most of the Buddhist texts were written and collected over six hundred books that he brought back with him. Xuanzang left China illegally in 629 CE after foreign travel was banned by Emperor Taizong; seventeen years later he returned a hero and was offered an appointment as an official in Taizong's court. Xuanzang refused and retired to spend the rest of his life translating the very texts he had sought during his pilgrimage. The results are a large number of highly technical translations of Buddhist works that had a lasting influence on the philosophical development of Buddhism in East Asia and sparked a period of intense economic and diplomatic exchange between China, Central, and South Asia. The story of Xuanzang's perilous journey grew over the years and entered into the folklore and legends of traditional Chinese popular culture – serving as a seed for one of the most famous works of Chinese literature, *The Journey to the West* written in the Ming Dynasty several hundred years later.

After the death of Emperor Taizong, a number of rulers succeeded him, including the one and only female to ever officially hold the office of Emperor: Empress Wu (r. 690 – 705 CE). Emperor Xuanzong ascended to the throne in 712 CE, shortly after Empress Wu was forced to abdicate. His reign of forty-three years (r. 712 – 756 CE) is the longest reign by a Tang emperor and marked the apex of the Golden age of Tang rule; it is also marked by the greatest tragedy of the dynasty that ushered in the beginning of the end for Tang rule over China.

Xuanzong oversaw continued military expansion into Central Asia and against the empires of Tibet and Korea. The expansion towards the West was of particular import for the government as it allowed them to maintain control over the Silk Road and trading with the Western Empires. This domination in Central Asia came to an abrupt end, however, in 751 CE at the pivotal battle of Talas River. A prince of a central Asian kingdom allied himself with the Arab Abbasid Caliphate against the Tang Dynasty which was soundly defeated. This marked the end of Chinese influence in Central Asia and the ascendancy of Islamic control of the region that has had a great impact on the development of World History ever since as it allowed Islam to grow as the dominant influence throughout the region.

While losing the battle of Talas River to the Abbasid Caliphate was certainly painful to the Chinese, it was the event that took place just a few years later that absolutely crippled Xuanzong's Dynasty: The An Lushan Rebellion of 755 CE. An Lushan was a Chinese general probably of Central Asian descent. Despite his non-native heritage, he gained the eye of Emperor Xuanzong through the aid of the Empror's favorite concubine, Yang Guifei, who used her increasing influence over the Emperor for the benefit of her family and friends. An Lushan was given charge over the armies on the Northeast border, around modern day Beijing. Utilizing his military influence, An Lushan declared a rebellion against what he called a decadent and corrupt Tang Dynasty in 755 CE and quickly marched against and seized the capital Chang'an in a matter of a few weeks. Xuanzong was forced to hastily flee the capital. During the retreat his soldiers clamored for the blood of his beloved concubine, Yang Guifei, who was blamed for the rebellion. Despite the Emperor's objections, Yang Guifei was executed along the side of the road as they escaped the city.

In order to quell the rebellion, the Tang court relied upon foreign aid and allowed rebel generals to maintain independent power as long as they nominally acceded to Tang rule. All of this had the effect of essentially undermining the power of the central government and limiting

the ability of the Tang court to gather taxes and administer large portions of the empire. And while the Tang Dynasty continued for another century and a half it was a shell of its former glory and ended with a whimper in 907 CE.

The Tang Dynasty is often looked back upon as the pinnacle of Chinese cultural development. It marked a high point in the development of the arts and poetry and served to solidify a common cultural identity among the various ethnicities that came under their rule. Indeed, many modern Chinese still refer to themselves as *Tangren* (people of the Tang) with large populations of Chinese that live outside of China forming communities referred to colloquially as *Tangrenjie* (street of the Tang people) often translated as Chinatown. And while there was a formation of a common cultural identity, the Tang Dynasty was also the most open to foreign ideas and cultures than ever before or since in Chinese history – with numerous religions including Islam, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, and Nestorian Christianity practiced openly through the capital city and gaining a number of converts. Indeed many of these religions were established under royal patronage, including Christianity. The Tang was also a period of great cultural transmission to both Korea and Japan as they adopted Chinese writing, religion, government structures, and laws and adapted them to their own cultural needs. Thus it was that Chinese civilization exerted a large influence throughout the entire region of East Asia.

Conclusion

The history of classical China has shown us a civilization that is both extremely conservative in preserving tradition and remarkably adaptable to new ideas and external influences. Even with a strong reliance on traditional Confucian values that tended to look towards the past to form solutions to present problems, the Chinese also adopted Buddhism and engaged in long-range trade across the Silk Road. Despite the wide ethnic differences throughout the region, a common cultural identity developed and persisted over an extensive period of time that tended to lend stability and justification for a political state that helped to preserve that very identity.

CHAPTER 13

Song to Ming Dynasties

Introduction

The first few centuries of the Post-Tang world consisted of China coming to terms with the rise in political and military power of surrounding cultures. The Song dynasty enjoyed great leaps in economic development but suffered drawbacks in military presence in East Asia. This lack of military presence eventually culminated in the complete collapse of the government in the face of the Mongolian expansion led by Temüjin (later known as Chinggis or Genghis Khan). This military submission was short lived, however, and once again the Chinese rose to the top of the military and political hierarchy in East Asia with the reemergence of the Ming Dynasty. The Ming serve as a cultural and artistic highpoint for the Chinese as they not only dominated the region of East Asia but also embark on massive exploration projects that reached as far as Africa and the Middle-East – it also marks the last time that the ethnic Han Chinese would governed China until the 20th century.

Song Dynasty (960 – 1279 CE)

The Song Dynasty, established in 960 CE, rose from the fragmented remains of the Tang dynasty that had fallen to rampant warlordism, military coups, and incursion from Northern non-Chinese invaders. This convinced the first Emperor of the Song Dynasty, Emperor Taizu, to restructure military and civilian administration. The results of this restructuring were mixed. On the one hand, it put an end to the constant threat and disruption of military coups and regime changes by the military thus creating a fairly stable period of Dynastic succession for the next thousand years. On the other hand, it led to a decline in the prestige of military service that created a long term weakening of the Chinese military until the 20th century.

The immediate effects of the military restructuring is that the Song Dynasty quickly lost control of much of the territory it once ruled over. In the north, several new kingdoms were established by nomadic groups from the Northern steppes or Central Asia. In the south, the Song lost control over the region of Annam (now known as Vietnam) that had been under Chinese influence for almost a thousand years. The continual conflict and pressure on their borders caused the Song Dynasty to withdraw further and further into the Southern regions of China around the Yangzi River. Finally, by 1127 CE, the Northern half of China was completely conquered by foreign Jurchen invaders who had even captured the Song Emperor. The Emperor's younger brother established a new capital in the south at Hangzhou and the Dynasty was restyled as the Southern Song – ruling over a much smaller territory.

Despite these military defeats and loss of territory (or perhaps because of them), the Song Dynasty flourished culturally and economically. Because of the movement of many non-Chinese ethnic groups into Northern China there was greater interaction between the Chinese and other cultural groups. The result was that many of these non-Chinese cultures began to adopt Chinese language, dress, and ideas creating a more cohesive cultural structure than had existed in the region previously. This process of foreign ethnicities adopting Chinese cultural norms is known

as Sinicization and is a characteristic pattern of Chinese civilization that helps to explain its longevity and continuity – especially in several later dynasties when China was under foreign rule. And while the northern Jurchen began to adopt Chinese culture this didn't stop them from continually coming into conflict with the Southern Song.

While China's military presence waned during the Song Dynasty its international presence increased through maritime trade and a number of technological and cultural advancements. Material evidence of that trade is spread throughout Indonesia, India, Africa and the Islamic world in the form of porcelain and other artifacts. While China had been engaging in long distance trade for a while via foreign traders – particularly over land along the Silk Road – it was during the Song that the Chinese merchants shifted this trade toward maritime routes and began employing their own fleet of ships throughout the South China Sea and into the Islamic world. The trade brought a dramatic increase of wealth to the Song Dynasty and supported a massive trade and naval presence that reached its zenith during the later Ming Dynasty and the fleet of Zheng He that will be discussed below.

Hand in hand with commercialization came new economic developments of the Song dynasty as well. Paper money reached wide circulation and credit loans and speculative ventures became a standard practice to further increase the amount and reach of maritime trade. The result of this wealth is that the society of the Song Dynasty was extremely sophisticated and urban. Foot-binding began to spread during this time. And large city centers develop in the South which had traditionally been seen as a more rural agrarian center than the North. New technologies were also supported by this increase in commercial wealth that influenced a wide range of aspects in Chinese society. Traditional woodblock printing, which had existed in China by this time for many centuries, was improved upon with the advent of moveable type printing during the Northern Song period and facilitated an explosion in the book culture of China. The first printing of the complete Buddhist canon was completed in 983. Song scholars also embarked on a large scale encyclopedia project that sought to collect and organize citations from over 2,500 different pre-Song texts into 1,000 volumes.

The combination of a wealthy, urban society with a newly burgeoning print culture that provided increasingly inexpensive books to a wider audience created the foundation for a transformation in society on a larger scale than had previously been possible. At the heart of this transformation was the assurance of the educated scholar as the elite path to status in society. And with the opening up of readily available texts, education became increasingly seen as the de facto path to social mobility and success. During the Song Dynasty appointment as a *mandarin* – an English word derived from Portuguese to denote the scholar-official class in Chinese government – was increasingly based solely upon scholarly achievement through the civil service exam. And while earlier dynasties had utilized the civil service exam, it was during the Song that the exam came to be seen as the most advantageous and egalitarian path to a career in government. Indeed, virtually every male in the Dynasty was eligible to take the exam and with the necessary books now more readily available education and book learning were seen as the central mode for attaining success in Song society.

While in theory anyone could take the civil service exam, the reality was that typically only the wealthy classes were the ones with the time and tutoring necessary to gain sufficient education to pass it. In the smaller, poorer regions villagers would often pool together resources sufficient for a single promising student to spend years of study for the exam in the hopes that they would be able to pass and bring prestige to the entire region on their behalf. This placed a great burden on those taking an extremely competitive exam. The exams themselves were based

upon the Confucian classics and it was during this development of education and scholarly achievement of the Song that a new form of Confucianism began to emerge.

Neo-Confucianism

By far, the most influential development of the Song Dynasty on East Asian culture, thought, and politics was Neo-Confucianism. The term Neo-Confucianism was coined by Western scholars to indicate a shift in philosophical inquiry distinct from traditional Confucian scholarship of the previous fifteen hundred years. However, the Chinese of the Song dynasty simply called this intellectual development *daoxue* (道學) or "study of the Way" and was not seen by them as being a "new" development of the Confucian tradition but the natural progression of thought in response to the concerns of their day.

There are a number of factors for why this new line of philosophical reasoning developed. Of most immediate interest to the intellectuals and public officials were the numerous occupations of North China by non-Chinese barbarians that continually forced the Song government to retreat further and further southward and left them relatively powerless in the region compared to previous Dynasties. For Confucian scholars this indicated a problem to the Confucian system itself. If the emperor and the government that supported him were faring this poorly did that indicate that they had somehow lost the mandate of heaven or failed to properly follow the Way taught by Confucius? If so, did this not then require a reanalysis of the original texts to find the problem and make a course correction in Confucian thought and practice? In addition, Buddhism and developments in Daoism provided metaphysical explanations for human action and salvation not dealt with in classic Confucian texts. In many ways, Neo-Confucianism can be understood as a response to these two primary challenges. It was an attempt to reassess the role of Confucianism in government and to better account for the metaphysical and soteriological questions of the Chinese worldview introduced by Buddhism and Daoism.

Regardless, this philosophical development by Song intellectuals moved the tradition in directions that earlier Confucian thinkers could scarcely have imagined and which the core writings certainly did not address. And with this great awakening of new intellectual vigor to the tradition, cultural shifts soon followed and influenced the development of Chinese medicine, civil service, literature, and religious practice. Indeed, I do not believe I'm going too far to say that the China we think of today in our modern world was born out of the development of Neo-Confucian thought more than the Confucianism of the Warring States Period. So what is Neo-Confucianism?

In essence Neo-Confucianism is an attempt to offer a clear metaphysical explanation of man's capacity for moral perfection. This metaphysical explanation for human action also required a more developed cosmology – or explanation of the origin of the universe – to better explain humanities role in the universe. Since traditional Confucianism rarely ventured into cosmological or metaphysical questions, Song scholars were forced to invest old terms with new meanings as well as by introducing new terminology, often borrowed from Buddhist and Daoist writings.

Earlier forms of Confucianism emphasized social welfare and political stability through proper human interactions. Since the emphasis was on human interrelations, very little time was spent trying to explain man's role in the universe beyond recognizing that Heaven bestowed its mandate on a virtuous ruler that reinforced proper moral action. To better explain human action beyond this form of political expediency, Zhou Dunyi (1012 – 1073 CE) developed the "diagram

of the supreme ultimate," an explanation for the origin of all existence. He begins from the position that the Universe follows rational, well-defined rules and can thus be understood by human beings who comprehend those rules. The beginning essence of the universe is an all-encompassing eternal force he termed as *The Infinite*. When *The Infinite* takes physical form it becomes *The Absolute* and is perceptible to human senses. *The Infinite* and *The Absolute* constitute the substance and shape of the universe. This substance and shape is manifest in an infinite variety of different 'things' through the interaction of the dualistic forces of *yin* and *yang*. Every object and idea in existence is brought about by the interaction of *yin* and *yang* to various degrees and will be dominated by one or the other. For example: men are *yang* dominant; women are *yin* dominant. The sun is *yang*; the moon is *yin*. South is *yang*; north is *yin*.

Thus everything that exists in the universe is a manifestation of *The Infinite* and the *The Absolute* brought about by the mixing of *yin-yang* in various degrees. Yet, what we think of as the final product of this process (whether we are talking about human beings, animals, trees, or even concepts such as north, south, love, and greed) is preceded by the immediate by-product of *yin-yang* interaction known as the five primary elements: metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. The five primary elements are the most basic form of physical existence. And everything else in existence is made up of a combination of these various elements together. For example, a tree is dominated by wood, but also consists of water and earth elements. These five elements are constantly interacting in both a generative and a destructive cycle. So, while water supports the wood element in a tree allowing it to grow, if fire is introduced to that same tree the wood and water elements are destroyed leaving behind the remains of the earth and metal elements (found in the ash that remains).

Zhou Dunyi argues that the entire universe consists of this continual interaction of *yin-yang* forces and the five primary elements in a continual cycle of creation and destruction. Indeed, taking a cue from Buddhist philosophy, he argues that the entire universe is in a state of constant fluctuation. This state of constant change makes the cosmos dynamic, but not random. Rather, it is based upon clear, rational, universal laws. And, if this is the case, once someone understands the pattern it is possible to divine the future of the universe and all objects within it – if one only knows where to look. The purest manifestation of this pattern is expressed in the eight trigrams whose origins can be traced all the way back to the *I Jing*, a book that tradition holds was edited by Confucius himself. Through a process of divination an individual can read the pattern of the eight trigrams and predict future outcomes.

What we see in the writings of Zhou Dunyi is a merging of disparate parts of Chinese thought such as *yin-yang* cosmology, the eight trigrams and divination, elements of Daoist naturalism, and Buddhist philosophies all of which had already existed by this time for many centuries into a cohesive explanation of the cosmos. He did this in order to couch Confucian ethics in a context that made sense to the cosmopolitan culture of the Song Dynasty. Yet, for all of these efforts, Zhou Dunyi still did not provide a solution to the fundamental problem facing Confucian scholars: why was Confucianism not resolving the problems of a weakened Song Dynasty? It took roughly another century for that problem to get resolved in the writings of Zhu Xi.

Zhu Xi

Zhu Xi (1130 – 1200 CE) was a government official who sought to synthesize the work of Neo-Confucian scholars with traditional Confucian thought into a new political ideology. He furthered the work of Zhou Dunyi by introducing two new ideas to his cosmology: Qi and Li.

Zhu Xi argued that the entire universe is made up of *qi* (氣). *Qi* is often translated as vital energy or matter-energy connoting the relationship between matter in a solid, liquid, or gaseous state – the Chinese character itself denotes the steam that is rising off of cooked rice – but it is often more clear to just leave the term untranslated. Everything that exists in the universe is made up of *qi*, this includes solid matter like our physical bodies and the air we breathe, as well as our thoughts and ideas we share with others. *Qi* is dynamic and constantly circulating into the various things that make up our cosmos. Since everything is fundamentally made up of *qi* this also means that everything in existence is essentially interrelated. For Zhu Xi and other Neo-Confucian thinkers this interrelatedness has moral implications for human interaction. Since we are all composed of the same *qi* then we ought to treat each other as family.

Added to the concept of *qi* was a notion that Zhu Xi called *li* (理) – often translated as principle. If *qi* is the material matter of a thing, then *li* is the reason for that things existence; the rule to which that thing should conform. The principle (*li*) for human beings – the template to which our physical substance is to be measured by – is humaneness, to be good. Specifically, the ability to distinguish right from wrong and develop compassion for others. So, if all human beings possess this fundamental *li* then why are some people evil? And if we all possess the same fundamental *qi*, then why are some born with imperfect bodies or poor health? Zhu Xi's response is that even though all human beings possess the same *li*, they possess *qi* of unequal quality. And thus there is the need to refine our *qi* in order to cultivate ourselves into morally perfect beings. It is helpful to think of the relationship between *li* and *qi* as the relationship between a blueprint for a home and the building material used to build that home. And just as a perfect blueprint might still result in a poorly constructed home, due to shoddy materials or poor workmanship, humanity possess the same *li* but an unequal portion of quality *qi*. And if you wanted to get the home to better match the ideal represented by the blueprint you would have to replace or update the building materials.

Human moral perfection requires a person to fully develop their *qi* to the highest refined state possible so that it can fully match our innate *li*. The fundamental question for Zhu Xi, then, was how does one go about developing their *qi*?

Zhu Xi's answer to this question was through "the investigation of things." If the universe was connected by virtue of being composed of *qi*, then the greatest way to understand and develop that *qi* was through a concerted effort to study manifestations of the most refined *qi* available. That is, a thorough education based upon the observation and study of the greatest ideas and objects that had come into existence throughout the cosmos. But, for Zhu Xi, not all ideas or objects were of equal importance. In particular, the writings of Confucius and Mencius provided the clearest access to the most refined form of *qi* available and a concerted program of study was the greatest avenue for self-cultivation of one's *qi*.

To this end, Zhu Xi wrote an extensive commentary for what he designated as the four essential Confucian classic texts: The Analects, Mencius, The Great Learning (Daxue), and Doctrine of the Mean (Zhong yong). This commentary served as the de facto method for introducing the new terminology and reworking of old Confucian ideals into the tradition. His commentary also served as the basis for the civil service examination system, not just of the Song Dynasty but of all the remaining Dynasties until the examination system was abolished under the modern Republic at the beginning of the 20th century.

Because the examination system was the primary means for social mobility, and since the examinations were based solely upon the commentary of Zhu Xi, his system of thought served as the core of all education in China for the next seven hundred years. His ideas influenced not just government and bureaucracy, but also Chinese medicine, martial arts, literature, art, and religious thought. Thus ensuring that Zhu Xi's particular brand of Neo-Confucianism became the foundation upon which all subsequent developments of Chinese culture and thought were built. This influence on the Chinese cultural consciousness is the very reason why Zhu Xi is often called the great synthesizer and is considered the greatest Confucian scholar, second only to Confucius himself. This is not to imply that Daoism, Buddhism, folk religion, and other aspects of Chinese thought ceased to exist or develop along different trajectories. But it is to say that because of the importance of Zhu Xi and Neo-Confucianism to the civilization at large it was virtually impossible for the other traditions not to respond to their influence.

The Mongol Coalition

At roughly the same time that Zhu Xi was writing in the Southern Song Dynasty, a new force was developing in the north among the nomadic tribes. Northern China has been the home to numerous small nomadic tribes. At the time of the Song Dynasty the northern part of China was ruled by the Jurchen tribe who had established their own Chinese-styled government called the Jin Dynasty. In the east the Tatars were the dominant nomadic power in the region of the Gobi Desert and steppes. In the mid-twelfth century the Tatars invited the leader of the minor Mongol tribe to a meeting where he was killed by poisoning. The dead chieftain's son, Temüjin, fled with his mother and lived in exile for many years while he built a following of companions.

Temüjin won the title of khan, or leader, over the Mongol tribe and took the name Chinggis Khan (also spelled Genghis). He sought to combat the rising power of the Tatars that had killed his father by forming alliances with other nomadic tribes, many of whom by this time had converted to Nestorian Christianity. By1200 CE Chinggis Khan's alliance had won a war with the Tatars. Chinggis emerged as a brilliant military leader. In 1206 CE Chinggis had an army of almost a hundred thousand soldiers and was recognized as Great Khan over a unified coalition of nomadic tribes who adopted the Mongolian identity of their new leader. Once solidifying his control over the nomadic tribes he moved his attention towards the Jurchen Jin Dynasty as well as Westward towards Central Asia.

Since the Chinese had interacted with various nomadic tribes from the early Han Dynasty, many of these tribes had familiarity with Chinese culture and had even adopted elements of that culture as their own. The Mongols, on the other hand, originated well outside that sphere of cultural influence. This might help to explain why the Mongols didn't focus just on conquering China but spread out in the four directions. Over the next half century the Mongols moved to conquer not only China, but also Central Asia, Persia, parts of East Europe, Russia, and Korea, while also mounting campaigns into India, Vietnam and against the islands of Japan. Japan was an especially difficult pill for the Mongolian Empire to swallow as it attempted to invade twice only to be rebuffed each time by Typhoons destroying their navy and giving rise to the myth of the *kamikaze* (divine wind) that protected Japan from foreign invasion.

By the time of his death in 1227 CE, Chinggis Khans' massive empire was divided into four territories inherited by his four sons. These territories eventually developed into independent

khanates: the Golden Horde controlling the area of Russia, the Il-khanate over the region of Persia, the Chaghadai Khanate over Central Asia, and the Yuan Dynasty over East Asia.

What might explain this rapid conquest over such a vast amount of territory against such a diversity of civilizations forming one of the largest land empire every known? Some scholars argue that a shift in climate during the latter half of the twelfth century and first half of the thirteenth century disrupted the normal growing season and drove the nomads out of the steppes for survival. Others argue that it was the sheer force of Chinggis Khan's influence and his own sense of purpose that led the Mongolian troops to conquest after conquest. Of course, we also can't ignore the reality that the hardy nomads with great skills in archery and horsemanship themselves proved to be an almost unstoppable military force to contend with.

In 1260, Chinggis Khan's grandson, Kublai, inherited the portion of the empire founded by his grandfather that covered East Asia and began to consolidate his rule in a Chinese-styled form of government that came to be called the Yuan Dynasty.

Yuan Dynasty (1271 – 1368 CE)

Although Chinggis Khan emerged well outside the cultural sphere of Chinese civilization, his grandson, Kublai, spent most of his life in China surrounded by Chinese culture. The formation of the Yuan dynasty and much of Kublai's reign would be spent attempting to achieve the delicate balance between controlling and appeasing his Chinese subjects – thus avoiding potential rebellion – while remaining true to his Mongolian roots. In some ways he succeeded; in others he did not.

In an attempt to appeal to the Chinese he ruled over, Kublai forbade nomads from grazing on Chinese farmlands. This also had the added benefit of increasing tax revenue from the agricultural surplus. In 1271 he restyled his rule under the Chinese name Yuan (meaning "beginning"). And in 1279 he finally succeeded in conquering the Southern Song Dynasty once again uniting all of the China under a single ruler. He established a Chinese style capital known as Dadu (meaning "great capital") which is now known as Beijing, the current capital of the modern People's Republic of China. He also learned a modicum of Chinese (though never how to read or write it) and would frequently dress in Chinese style.

Yet, given all of these concessions to appease his Chinese subjects, Kublai also imposed other requirements during his rule that reveal his fear of and desire to control the Chinese population. He attempted to impose a new writing system based on the Tibetan script – Tibet having been conquered by the Mongols in 1252. This attempt failed completely. A class system was introduced that placed the Mongols at the top of the hierarchy followed by central Asians and other nonnatives with the Chinese occupying the lowest levels. The civil service examination system was also revised with two different versions being available; one for the Chinese and one for non-Chinese. The examination for the ethnic Chinese was more rigorous and difficult to pass thus ensuring that the government wouldn't be too overcrowded with native Chinese. This is particularly ironic considering the large extent to which the Mongolian rulers relied upon the already established Chinese bureaucratic apparatus to administer their empire. At various times it was illegal for native Chinese to own weapons for (well justified) fear of uprisings among the population.

The ruling Mongols of the Yuan dynasty struggled to find the balance between appeasing the native population while also securing their control of the region. One development of this inherent tension was a further opening to foreign ideas and cultural practices. The Mongolian court was open to a host of foreign visitors. This is the time when Marco Polo is said to have traveled through China, spending time in Kublai Khan's court. There was also a greater openness to non-native religions. Kublai Khan hosted debates between various religious representatives. Indeed, to a certain extent the Yuan dynasty offered a great deal of religious liberty within a very pluralistic society. To be fair, religious pluralism was the norm rather than the exception for much of Chinese history before this period. What the Yuan Dynasty did was to increase the variety and interaction between these various preexisting traditions on a scale that hadn't been seen since the Tang Dynasty of the early 7th century CE. The Mongol rulers themselves were very open about religious practice but many tended to closely associate with and practice a form of Buddhism emerging out of Tibet, thus starting the close relationship between modern day Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhism despite the significant geographical distance between the two regions.

Kublai Khan died in 1294 and the Yuan Dynasty plunged into a succession crisis from which it never recovered. Struggle for political control at the death of a leader was not something new to Mongolian society, but such struggles were not conducive to administering a large Dynasty like the Yuan. Such upheaval in the transfer of power provided opportunities for factions within the Chinese population to rise up in rebellion. Throw in a plague that spread throughout China around 1320 and you have a recipe for disaster. This rampant social upheaval provided the Chinese ample opportunity to indulge in apocalyptic speculation. Such apocalyptic ideas sparked the formation of new religious movements that predicted the arrival of the future Buddha, Maitreya, the coming end of the world, or at the very least the end of the despised rule of the foreign Mongolians. Movements like the White Lotus and the Red Turbans emerged during the 1330's and began revolting from Mongolian rule. By 1368 the Yuan Dynasty was overwhelmed by rebellion from the ethnic Han Chinese and the Ming Dynasty was formed.

Whatever else we might say about the Yuan Dynasty, and the Mongolian conquest in general, it certainly brought one chapter of world history to a close and opened another. In a few short years Chingis Khan and his followers conquered and controlled territory from the Pacific Ocean all the way to the Mediterranean Sea and Eastern Europe. It brought a disparate collection of civilizations, societies, and cultures under the control of a more-or-less unified empire. This brought a number of peoples and ethnicities into contact in a way that had never happened before. Trade and intercultural exchange expanded under the Mongolian influence. The stories of Marco Polo's travels in China drew European attention to a region that was still largely mythological in the public consciousness. The well-traveled Arab, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, visited China and his writings spread throughout the Muslim world. And in an interesting twist, Chinese Nestorian Christians made visits to European monarchs and even had an audience with the Roman Catholic pope.

Of course, this interconnected world under the Mongolians wasn't entirely positive. The Bubonic plague, or Black Death, that ravaged Europe in the middle of the 14th century originated in China. Despite the efforts of the Mongolians to control the spread of the disease, the epidemic was able to spread along various trade routes and eventually carried to Europe by unsuspecting Italian merchants fleeing Mongolian attacks who had contracted the disease from the very Mongolian forces they were escaping from. The resulting epidemic devastated Europe's population and had long term cultural, economic, and social effects on European society.

Each region of the world responded differently to the Mongolian conquest. The Chinese, after deposing the Yuan rulers formed a new Dynasty, and had one last grand show on the international stage before eventually choosing isolation and turning inward. Europe, on the other hand, began looking more outward seeking new trade routes to the East. Europe also developed the idea that there was an as yet unknown Christian kingdom far to the East that they could ally themselves with in their continual quest to overcome what they saw as a great Islamic threat to Christianity. Of course, none of those Christian kingdoms actually existed, but it did drive thoughts of European expansion into new territories. And the Islamic Abbasid Dynasty came to an end with their defeat by the hands of the Mongols and the sacking of Baghdad in 1258 (see chapter 13).

Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644)

As the Yuan Dynasty was struggling with rebellion in the early 14th century, a young orphan named Zhu Yuanzhang was taken in by a Buddhist monastery where he made preparation to become a monk. When the government cracked down on religious societies that were rising up against them, that monastery was destroyed by Mongolian troops. Young, poverty stricken, and without family, Yuanzhang joined a religious movement fighting against the Mongols called the Red Turbans. He showed prodigious talent as a soldier. Rising through the ranks, he ultimately solidified the rebellions under his leadership, chased the Mongol emperor back to the northern steppes and established a new Chinese dynasty entitled Ming (明 Chinese for "bright") and restyled himself as Emperor Hongwu (r. 1368 – 1398).

Several challenges immediately faced emperor Hongwu. The first problem was the continued threat of the Mongols to the north. While he had successfully driven them out of China, he couldn't get rid of them completely. The number of experienced soldiers available to the emperor was high due to the numerous rebellions that had risen up again the Mongols. And rather than fall back into the traditional Confucian habit of placing the military low down in the social hierarchy, Hongwu elevated the military to the top of the social ladder. In Hongwu's court, becoming a soldier was a respectable means to social status and power within his government. It also had the added benefit of strengthening his military capacity to defend against the constant incursions from the northern nomads. Under his rule, China's borders expanded north into the Gobi desert and Manchuria and in the south he attempted to once again assert Chinese control of Vietnam.

The second problem was reestablishing the bureaucratic apparatus of the state with a loyal civil service. The Mongols had relied upon non-Han Chinese to run most of the government functions and actively dissuaded the traditional Confucian gentry from participating in government functions. For Hongwu, this meant two things: he would need to revise the civil examination system and reestablish Confucianism and the attendant Confucian class of scholars into the government. In reality, perhaps the greatest challenge to achieving these goals was Hongwu himself. He was a dedicated autocrat, refusing to allow the government to make any decision without his input. This required him to work constantly to keep up to date on all the information and reports flooding into the capital and created a bottleneck in administrative decisions waiting for his feedback. It is perhaps because of this tendency towards complete control that Hongwu was very distrustful of the official class within his government. He was also a rather spiteful man that hated to relinquish any sort of power to others.

Indeed, Hongwu established a system within the Ming court in an attempt to check the power of the Confucian official in the form of eunuchs. The eunuchs served as servants to the emperor and administered the inner court, particularly taking care of the royal concubines. Their close proximity to the emperor was meant to serve as a counterbalance to the power of the educated elite. Yet, Hongwu was wary of their gaining too much power and influence over the imperial family and so ordered that the eunuchs were to receive no formal education to avoid such a possibility. While it took years of study and skill to pass the civil-service examination and become an appointed official, all it took to become a eunuch was a connection to the court and castration.

This attempt to create a system of checks between the court officials and eunuchs resulted in a long standing enmity between the two groups and a constant power struggle between them. At times the officials rose in power and influence and at other times, particularly when the emperor was extremely young or weak willed, the eunuchs dominated. This pitted the two groups against each other that followed a cyclical pattern with the end result being the eventual weakening of the government as much of the power was actually wielded behind the throne by which ever group was in control at the time.

Cultural Developments

Aside from the military developments and power struggles between the officials and eunuchs, the Ming dynasty enjoyed great cultural advancements. Perhaps most famously, and most important, was the development of literature during this period. The Ming Dynasty is the golden age of the Chinese novel. Three of the four greatest novels of Chinese literature were written during this period: *Water Margin*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and *Journey to the West*.

Water Margin

Water Margin – also sometimes translated as *Outlaws of the Marsh* and *All Men are Brothers* – is attributed to the author Shi Nai'an (though later chapters were likely added by other authors) and written during the late 14th century. Set in the Song Dynasty, it tells the story of a group of 108 outlaws that flee government repression and, like Robin Hood, fight against corrupt officials on behalf of the common man. These outlaws eventually receive amnesty from the government and fight against foreign invasion and rebellion on their behalf. Separate episodes follow various outlaws on their daring adventures and explain their reasoning for leaving society to live on the margins. While the novel incorporates many pre-existing and popular heroic stories, it uses these stories to emphasize that much of the "heroism" praised in society is actually quite brutal and selfish and rarely done for the benefit of the powerless.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms

Set during the fall of the Han Dynasty and its immediate aftermath, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is part historical fiction and part mythical romanticism. The book was written at the end of the 14th century and attributed to Luo Guanzhong. It follows a number of lords and their retainers who attempted to replace the falling power structure of the Han Dynasty and the resulting war between the three kingdoms that emerged from its ruins. A massive work, it

includes over a thousand different characters, many of whom are based on actual historical figures, and their plots and wars to wrestle control from their enemy. Arguably the most widely known and read novel in pre-modern and modern East Asia, it became popular not just in China but also Korea and Japan. Often compared to Shakespearean drama for its ability to use the drama of political unrest to explore themes of human agency to determine the outcome of events. A primary theme throughout the novel is the conflict between the ideal of dynastic stability and the reality of anarchy that arises when a dynasty inevitably collapses.

Journey to the West

Perhaps the most overtly bawdy of the great Ming novels, *Journey to the West* is a legendary and folkloric development of the historical journey of the monk Xuanzang to India in pursuit of Buddhist scriptures during the early Tang Dynasty. The novel is attributed to Wu Cheng'en and published around 1592 towards the end of the Ming Dynasty. On the surface, *Journey to the West* is a serious religious tale about a dedicated monk on a quest to discover the supreme teachings of the Buddha and bring them back to his fellow countrymen in China. Beneath the surface, the novel is a comic, bawdy tale of demons and monsters where even the "heroes" tasked with protecting the monk on his journey subvert the entire mission to their own whims and desires. The monk is accompanied by several mythical beings recruited to protect him but who have problems of their own – including a monkey who started a war with the gods and almost completely destroyed heaven with his wild antics and a pig that was a former immortal kicked out of heaven for getting drunk and flirting with the moon goddess. While ostensibly a tale about a Buddhist monk, the novel synthesizes a complex weave of Neo-Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist thought and practice together to explore the nature of spiritual achievement and the challenge of controlling our own inner demons and desires. All of this while portraying one comic episode after another intent on both poking fun at taking a too serious outlook on religion as well as presenting an extended allegory on the virtue of cooperation in the search for spiritual enlightenment

These novels are the culmination of the emergence of fiction literature that had its roots back in the Song dynasty and the emergence of a print culture that allowed for the professionalization of entertainment – often seen by the Confucian establishment as a less than reputable occupation. Indeed, because the writing and publishing of fiction was so looked down upon most novels from this period were authored under pseudonyms and used a more colloquial style rather than the strict classical style used in official histories and traditional Confucian writings. The Chinese literary scholar, Andrew Plaks, argues that these Ming novels reflected a new set of cultural values and intellectual concerns. They integrated conventions from early oral story-tellers such as episodic structure, songs, proverbs, moral parables, and speaking directly to the audience. And by utilizing a colloquial style they were widely read and able to offer subtle critique of the Ming government and cultural decadence. While all three of these novels dealt with historical events in their own way they turned these often serious and heroic tales into irreverent and comic critiques of hypocrisy and failures of Confucian government that failed to live up to its ideals for the lower classes of society.

Ming influence and isolationism

The Ming dynasty is often accused of being isolationist, and in some sense it was, but it was a curious type of isolationism. From the very beginning the Ming court was very much

concerned in international affairs as evidenced by the military expansion mentioned earlier. In addition, the third ruler of the Ming Dynasty, Emperor Yongle (r. 1402 – 1424), repeatedly sent out a massive maritime armadas throughout the region. These expeditions were led by Zheng He, a Chinese born Muslim eunuch that entered into service of the court at a young age. And although he was Muslim, he was also a devotee to the bodhisattva Guanyin who is famous for her mercy towards sailors in distress on ocean voyages. He was also a close personal friend to the emperor. From 1405 to 1433 seven voyages left China and traveled throughout South East Asia, Indonesia, India, the Arabian Gulf, and even reached as far as the eastern coast of Africa. The first voyage launched with sixty-two major ships, accompanied by hundreds of smaller vessels, with roughly 28,000 soldiers, merchants and sailors. The largest ships in the armada, called treasures ships, were reported to be roughly four hundred feet in length (roughly four times the size of the vessels used by Columbus half a century later).

Trade was not the primary motive for these expeditions, though it certainly took place making many of the eunuchs on these voyages very rich; neither was exploration since they followed well established trade routes. Rather, these voyages were about making the glory of China, and by extension the Yongle Emperor, known to the rest of the world. Each kingdom that they visited were entered into the tribute system and allowed to engage in diplomatic relations with China. This was often advantageous to most of these regions as it brought prestige to the ruling elite and often tribute states received more valuable gifts from the court than they gave. The expeditions succeeded in spreading the influence and increasing the prestige of the Ming court. Diplomats, with exotic gifts such as giraffes, zebras, and regional foods, flooded into the capital where they were treated luxuriously before returning to their home regions. China installed a new king in Java, captured hostile forces in Borneo and Sri Lanka, and exerted their influence throughout the region creating a stable international network of trade.

These voyages ended abruptly in 1433. They were deemed too expensive and seen as offering little in return, especially since at this time China was embroiled in fighting with Mongolian nomads and was still busy building a new capital in Beijing. This capital project was started by Hongwu and eventually became known as the Forbidden City – the impressive and imposing imperial complex still at the heart of modern Beijing. The massive armada of ships were decommissioned and eventually ordered destroyed.

What is perhaps most intriguing about these expeditions is that the Ming court possessed the technology and wealth necessary to explore the globe roughly a half-century before Europe but chose not to do it. While some scholars attempt to use this as an example of the natural and essential difference between Asiatic and European culture, it would perhaps be more fruitful to observe the differences in political, social, and economic pressures between the European and Chinese context of the 15th century. At the time Europe was steeped in religious, political, and economic conflict between the various powers that often drove both governments and merchants to seek for new sources of revenue or other resources that would offer advantages over their competition. China, as the largest, most advanced, and economically stable power in the region of East and Southeast Asia would have felt little pressure or incentive to engage in such a costly endeavor with little hope of a receiving a valuable return on the investment. Couple that with internal political strife between court officials and eunuchs, as well as the challenges that they faced from Mongolian raiders, and it is little wonder that the Ming court ended the costly expeditions and instead chose to focus on domestic affairs. Zheng He had voyaged throughout Southeast Asia, Indonesia, South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, and everywhere he went there was clear evidence of Chinese technological and economic superiority. What need, so the

Confucian officials of the Ming court argued, was there to continue to go out among these lesser civilizations? What did China have to gain from such a costly endeavor?

In this sense, then, the Ming was isolationist – not in terms of closing themselves off from others but in seeing themselves as so much more advanced and economically self-sufficient that they felt no need to engage with the civilizations around them. In the early 15th and 16th century this was certainly true. But that quickly changes in the 17th century as China once again found itself under the rule of foreigners, this time from Manchuria. And the Manchurian government soon found itself under pressure from Europe.

CHAPTER 14

South Asia through the Gupta Empire

Wherever Sacred Duty erodes, O Bharata, or the lack of Sacred Duty dominates, I manifest myself there.

It is better to do one's Duty poorly than to do another's Duty well

Bhagavad-Gita

Early Civilizations in South Asia

This chapter will cover the development of the earliest civilization in South Asia to roughly the end of the Gupta Empire in the 6th century CE. While there is clear evidence of trade and interaction between South Asia and Mesopotamia, civilization in South Asia represents an independent development with its own unique languages, religions, and institutions. One of the challenges to studying the history of this region is the lack of written records from the earliest time period. We have a number of texts available to us that are reputed to have been orally passed down from the dawn of civilization but the actual writings themselves come from a much later period. While this does not mean that we should reject these records outright, it does mean that we should be aware of the problems that such sources present to the historian.

Another challenge arising in the study of early South Asia comes in the types of sources that are available to us. The records that are preserved from the earliest periods are almost exclusively religious and/or philosophical in nature. This means that we have only a murky understanding of the political and social situation in the early periods. Because of these limitations, we will focus predominantly on tracing an intellectual history, the progressions of ideas and religions, rather than trying to reconstruct the narrative of kings and kingdoms.

In creating an intellectual history, we see that a central question repeated throughout South Asian civilization is how to resolve the tension between fulfilling an individual's social duties and escaping the undesirable consequences that arises from those very social duties. What do you do when you are duty bound to marry and have children but also believe that having a family hinders your spiritual progression? Or are obligated to engage in warfare but are concerned about the consequences of engaging in such violence? This is a central concern that has multiple ramifications for South Asian civilization and arises again and again throughout the religious and intellectual history we will explore throughout this chapter.

Indus Valley Civilization

The earliest material record we have of civilization in South Asia is referred to as the Indus Valley Civilization (also sometimes referred to as the Harappan Civilization after one of the archaeological sites) and refers to a homogenous collection of numerous cities built across a wide region of the Indus River valley. These cities are located in the northwest region of the sub-

continent of South Asia predominantly in what is now modern day Pakistan. While it is clear that the IVC developed independently around 3300 BCE (with human settlements having existed for thousands of years prior to this), there is also ample archaeological evidence to show that it engaged in trade with the civilizations that developed in Mesopotamia and thus indicates cross-fertilization between the two early civilizations.

Like other Hydraulic civilizations, the IVC developed along a specific river system (the Indus River) and its various tributaries, covering a vast geographical region. One of the things that is distinct about this civilization is the uniformity of architectural style and building materials that indicate an organized and well administered society. Indeed, there is strong evidence to suggest that these various cities were built from the ground up rather than being the slow accumulation of buildings developing from a small village to a large city as appears to have happened in early Mesopotamia.

Two of the most famous sites of the IVC are the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro and will be discussed here as examples of the civilization. Because the written records we have discovered from this civilization have yet to be deciphered, we must rely almost solely on archaeological records for our understanding of this early civilization. By looking at the remains of these cities we can begin to formulate a picture of what this civilization might have looked like and the attributes favored by the society.

The archeological remains of both Harappa and Mahenjo-Daro provide tantalizing clues about the IVC, but leave us with very little concrete facts. We find the cities are aligned along straight streets, the buildings were built from bricks of a uniform size, and the buildings were of the same relative size and architectural style. The cities included an acropolis and large granaries that would have held the agricultural surplus produced by the fields that surrounded them as well as a sewer and drainage system. All of which indicates a well-organized and administered society. The height of the IVC as evidenced by these two cities is dated to around 2300 BCE.

There are also intriguing clues that hint to the religious elements of the IVC. Mahenjo-Daro contains a large pool that some scholars argue indicate religious washing or other ritual performances – though it is very difficult to actually say what purposes it served with the information available to us. We have also found many female figurines throughout the cities that some scholars argue represent fertility goddesses. Perhaps most intriguing are the large number of small seals found that contain what we assume to be an, as yet, unknown script. The most famous of these is known as the paśupati seal which contains what appears to be a man with three heads sitting in a yoga or meditation posture that arguably bears some similarity to later Hindu representations of the god Śiva. For some, this indicates a connection between the IVC and the later Vedic culture that develops several centuries after our last evidence for the IVC, which seems to have declined suddenly between 1800 and 1700 BCE.

Aryan migration thesis and Cultural transformation thesis

With evidence of a complex, well administered, and geographically expansive civilization, why did the IVC disappear? There are a number of proposed theories that can be distilled into two distinct camps.

The Aryan migration thesis is perhaps the oldest argument for the demise of the IVC. To summarize a complex argument, this theory holds that groups of people calling themselves Aryans (Sanskrit for noble) migrated from the steppes of Central Asia through the mountain

passes of modern day Afghanistan roughly around 1500 BCE. Through the process of migrating into South Asia the Aryans systematically subjugated, destroyed, and pushed out the original inhabitants of the IVC. They established themselves throughout the Northern Gangetic plain and instituted a new cultural system based upon a group of religious texts they brought with them called the Vedas. The Vedas are written in a language called Sanskrit which is part of the Indo-European language family and is related to languages such as Greek and Latin. From this migration there resulted a division in the subcontinent of South Asia with the Vedic Aryans establishing themselves in the north and the original inhabitants being forced to migrate to the south.

The second theory is commonly referred to as the cultural transformation thesis. This theory argues that the culture already established in South Asia slowly transformed from the IVC to the Vedic Aryans rather than through a mass migration. Proponents of this thesis argue that the archeological records do not support the notion of a new ethnicity migrating into the region, violently pushing the old inhabitants further south. Rather, the archeology indicates that the people, agriculture, and language underwent a slow change over the years leading to the apparent cultural differences that are now evident.

There are challenges to both theories. The cultural transformation thesis does not take into account the clear relationship between the language, mythology, and religion of the Aryans with other European groups that would suggest a migration from a region outside of the subcontinent. On the other hand, there is little archeological evidence to support the notion of a large, foreign group migrating into the region and massacring or violently forcing the former inhabitants to relocate. However, there is little reason to doubt that a new group of nomadic-pastoralists did migrate into the region roughly around 1500 BCE. So what is the answer?

It is plausible that a combination of both theories working together provides a better possibility of what happened to the IVC. There is evidence of a number of natural disasters, both earthquakes and floods that would have diverted the flow of several tributaries to the Indus River and led to difficulties in agriculture, trade, and caused harm to the established cities. These natural disasters with shifts in weather and agricultural patterns could have caused the inhabitants of the IVC to slowly abandon previously settled regions for greener pastures. Such a change would also result in a transformation of culture. Combined with the influx of new migrants like the Aryans moving into South Asia over several centuries who may have absorbed preexisting cultural practices and also brought with them new technologies such as the horse and chariot and new religious ideas – all of which would have allowed them to assert political dominance and incorporate cultural distinctions in the form of a hierarchical class structure – it is plausible that the IVC simply withered away as people relocated or began to mix with the new migrating Aryans to form a new Vedic culture that came to dominate the northern regions of the Gangetic plains.

Vedic Aryanism

Regardless of how the IVC disappeared, we know from the archaeological remains that it did happen. Several centuries later, around 1500 – 1200 BCE, a new culture and religion came to dominate the northern region: Vedic Aryanism.

This culture and religion is based upon the four Vedas composed in Sanskrit, the religious language in which the early texts are written. The four Vedas are:

- Ṛg (Rig) Veda
- Sāma Veda
- Yajur Veda
- Atharva Veda

The Ṛg Veda is considered the oldest of the four texts and contains over a thousand hymns praising the gods and describing their deeds. The other three texts appear to have developed over time in support of and response to developments in ritual practice as the Vedic culture took root and developed across the northern Indo-gangetic plain.

The Vedas are understood by those within the tradition to be revelations spoken to early sages (ṛṣi) who passed these revelations down orally. They describe a vibrant world of gods (*devas*) and provide instructions for how humans might interact with those gods. The fire sacrifice to the god *Agni* (god of Fire, cognate with our modern English word Ignite and Agony) serves as a prototypical example of the interactions between mortals and gods. In this fire sacrifice priests repeat the hymns and formulae found in the Vedas to call the god *Agni* to the fire and offer up sacrifices. They request that *Agni* take these offerings to the other gods in exchange for their favor and protection. These sacrifices can be almost anything ranging from milk, clarified butter, and grains to animal sacrifices such as cattle or horses. Fire serves as the link between mortal and god and is the means for interacting with the supernatural world.

One of the things that we see from this sacrifice is that gods and humans are bound in a symbiotic relationship. As men conduct the fire sacrifice properly they provide the gods with the things that they need. In return the gods will protect and support the humans in their actions. Often those performing the sacrifice will be seeking rain for crops, protection over their flocks, or sons to be born in their families. This is a relationship in which the gods are bound to the humans and both are dependent upon each other. We also see that this religious tradition is well suited to a nomadic culture. There is no need for elaborate structures, art, or written texts (the Vedas are passed down orally), and fire is an easily created and transported tool for religious practice. Thus, the early Vedic rituals appear to address the needs of a nomadic lifestyle and reflects that type of society through its portability.

Not only do the Vedas provide instructions for religious performance, they also offer a cosmology that explains and justifies a particular kind of social structure. In a very famous hymn from the Ṛg Veda called the "Hymn to Puruṣa" (also known as the Dismemberment of the Cosmic Person) the first sacrifice is recorded. This is a sacrifice of the Cosmic Person (Puruṣa) from which all creation springs. It describes how the gods performed this initial sacrifice and from the various portions of Puruṣa's body comes the four classes of traditional South Asian society known as the four Varṇas. From the mouth of Puruṣa sprang the brahmin or priest class. From the arms came the warriors (*kṣatriya*). The thighs became the farmers, artisans, and other producers of society (*Vaiśya*). And finally, from the feet came the lowest class of society: the servants (*Śudra*). This particular Vedic hymn not only provides an explanation for the creation of the world it also provides a justification for the stratification and division of labor within society as well. These four Varna serve as the basic structure of Aryan society and each class within that society has its own basic obligations and functions.

By providing both the basic religious and social structure for the culture, the Vedas are foundational to South Asian civilization. They provide justification for every facet of daily life from the ritual sacrifices to one's duty within society. Yet, what happens as that society changes

and develops over time? How can ancient texts address concerns that develop after they were written? One solution is in the creation of a new body of texts that don't replace the Vedas but attempt to reinterpret them to meet new needs as a civilization develops.

Developments in South Asian thought

Sometime around the 6th century BCE there is evidence of a dramatic shift in South Asian civilization. By this time, the nomadic culture of the early Aryans had developed into a stable, agricultural society. To meet the shifting needs of the developing urban culture, a new group of texts were developed and appended to the end of the Vedas. These texts were known as the *Upaniṣads*.

The *Upaniṣads* attempt to address and incorporate a number of new ideas that developed in the intervening years since the Vedas were collected (ca. 1500 – 1000 BCE). While it is difficult to trace the historical origins, it is clear that by the 6th century a number of new religious ideas had taken root and were incorporated into the general South Asia world-view. While not all of the *Upaniṣad* texts agree on every point, the following discussion attempts to provide a general overview of the main points that appear to be broadly accepted within the traditions we are discussing.

Saṃsāra, or the cycle of death and rebirth, is perhaps the central idea that developed during this time period and becomes the seminal problem South Asian philosophy and religion seeks to resolve. This is the notion that when a person dies something of them lives on and is reborn in a new form. This produces a cycle of birth and death that can be unending and therefore inherently unsatisfactory due to the impermanent nature of such an existence. The primary goal, then, is to discover a way to overcome this cycle of reincarnation. Saṃsāra has several implications that must then be addressed. First, what is it that gets reborn? What determines what form a person will take in their next life? And finally, can this cycle be broken and how would you go about doing that?

The form of a person's rebirth is determined by the actions that they take in this life. When an individual fulfills the Dharma (duty) that is inherent in their social status according to their place within the four Varṇas then they engage in good karma (literally: action). The karma that an individual develops in this life determines their next birth. Thus one who fulfills their social duty in this life can earn a better birth in their next life. Those that do not fulfil their duty will incur bad karma which will result in a lower rebirth. Through developing good karma one could be reborn in a higher realm, including in the heavens among the gods, or even as a god (notice the implication here that even the gods themselves are bound by the cycle of reincarnation). Bad merit would result in a lower rebirth, as an animal, insect or, even worse, in the hell realms.

Yet, what exactly is it that gets reborn over and over again? According to the earliest *Upaniṣad* texts, each individual is possessed with an immutable spark of the divine; an unchangeable, eternal, portion of the universe that makes up their true self. This is called the ātman, or true self, and is nothing other than a piece of the underlying essence of reality that makes up the core of each individual. This ātman originates from the first sacrifice, so the *upaniṣads* argue, as reflected in the hymn on the sacrifice of the cosmic Person found in the Rig Veda discussed above.

The fundamental problem of saṃsāra is that this cycle of rebirth keeps our ātman trapped, separated from the essence of the universe from which it originally sprang. Thus the goal of every individual should be to seek liberation (mokṣa) from reincarnation so that our true self (our ātman) can return back to that universal being. This essence of the universe is known as *brahman*. Rather than being a god in the sense of a living anthropomorphic being, *Brahman* is more accurately conceived of as the power and unvarying reality of the universe.

And how is mokṣa achieved? On the one hand, traditional Vedic Aryanism presents a list of social duties and obligations (Dharma) that every member of society must fulfil to procure good karma and improve their lot in the next life. These social obligations are exemplified through the rituals and rites described in the Vedic texts. The problem, so the authors of the *Upaniṣad* texts say, is that this will never lead to true liberation (mokṣa) of the ātman. Rather, it will simply keep every individual in the cycle of rebirth because fulfilling one's duty (or failing to do so) will always result in the accumulation of karma and bind an individual to another rebirth. The key is to figure out a way to get rid of all karma and live in such a way as to never accumulate it again. Without karma driving our ātman into a new birth we will finally be free to return back to *Brahman* and eternal bliss.

The answer, according to many *Upaniṣad* texts, lies in the practice of asceticism and meditation. This response is ultimately a radical reinterpretation or outright rejection of traditional Vedic rituals. By withdrawing from society and rejecting the duties that it requires of its members, an individual can begin to break the unending cycle of karma and rebirth. But withdrawing from society is not enough. An individual must also learn to control their thoughts and desires through a strict regimen of austerities, celibacy and meditation designed to break our attachment to this mortal world and allow the practitioner to realize the true nature of their ātman as nothing other than a piece of the immortal *brahman*. Through this ultimate realization, achieved through meditation, the ātman obtains liberation.

It is important to understand that the *Upaniṣads* represent only one of a number of arguments about how to solve the problem of reincarnation. Indeed, there is actually a great deal of variation in interpretation among the many different *Upaniṣad* texts themselves. Critics of the ascetic solution just described argue that withdrawing from society is itself a failure to fulfil dharma and thus will automatically lead to a lower rebirth from the negative karma earned by such an action. The response from those that support asceticism argue that it is not a concern because the practice of extreme austerities and meditation negate the accumulated merit (good or bad) and free the ātman for final liberation. A famous passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* describes this truth of the essence of our ātman with the image of mixing salt in a glass of water. Even though we cannot see the salt, it is always there. It is only when the water is thrown out and allowed to evaporate that the salt becomes apparent. So too, when we throw out our social and physical self by separating from society and engaging in austerities and meditation, can the true ātman be realized. Similarly, when our ātman is dissolved into the eternal *brahman* as salt is dissolved into water it becomes indistinguishable from the essence of the universe, it becomes one with the universe and is liberated from saṃsāra.

The problem of reincarnation becomes the predominant concern for South Asian religion and philosophy from the 6th century BCE onwards. Various traditions have arisen to provide an answer to this concern and a variety of traditions have developed as a result. The traditions of Vedic Aryanism, with their rituals and sacrifices based upon the Vedic texts, existed (and still exist today) side by side with those that rejected those social rituals and sought to reinterpret the

Vedic texts based upon their understanding of these new ideas. How to resolve these tensions became a point of great debate among various texts and thinkers throughout South Asian history.

One solution to this tension between fulfilling one's social obligation and ascetic withdrawal from society is the āśrama system. The āśramas developed as a sort of compromise between the two extremes in religious practice and consists of the following four stages to an individual's life.

- Student
- Householder
- Forest Dweller (hermit)
- Ascetic

The life stage of a student is designed to allow an individual to learn their dharma by becoming a student of the Vedic texts and the rituals associated with it according to the Dharma (duty) that is ascribed to their particular class (varṇa). When an individual marries they move into the stage of a householder where they can fulfill their dharma by producing a male heir and performing rituals that thus fulfil their obligations to society. As a man gets older he may enter into the later stages of the āśrma by retiring to the forest and engaging in meditation to begin the quest for discovering his ātman. As he progresses along the path of a forest dweller he may choose to completely withdraw from society and begin the rigorous practice of extreme asceticism and meditation in preparation for final liberation. The āśramas allowed members of society caught between the desire to fulfil dharma for a better rebirth and the quest for final mokṣa to find some resolution to that tension.

But not everyone was satisfied with this solution. Included among those within this debate are some that rejected the Vedic texts and āśramas completely and offered a radically new solution to the problem of reincarnation. Foremost among those that completely rejected the Vedic texts and the world that they represented was a man that came to be known as the Buddha.

Rejecting Tradition: The Origins of Buddhism

There are many different traditions that rejected this basic world view of the Vedic texts throughout South Asian history. Jainism and Buddhism are perhaps two of the most well-known and longest lasting of the traditions. For the purposes of this book we will not spend time discussing Jainism and will instead focus on Buddhism. This is not because Jainism was, or is, unimportant to the history of South Asia, but because Buddhism tended to exert a greater influence on the culture at large. It is also a tradition that, unlike Jainism, moved beyond the region of South Asia to become extremely influential through all of Central, East, and Southeast Asia. Indeed, Buddhism is the only religion to spread throughout and be adopted by the majority of Asian people. Buddhism has exerted a huge and lasting influence through the various cultures and history of all Asia. For this reason it is essential to understand the foundational teachings of Buddhism in order to better understand the history of other regions, particularly that of East Asia that will be covered in the next chapter.

Our discussion of Buddhism will, of necessity, be limited. Buddhism has a very diverse and complicated history. In this chapter we will focus on the earliest initial teachings that became most influential in South Asia. We will call this the Mainstream tradition to acknowledge its

influence in the history and culture of South Asia from roughly the 5th century BCE onwards until Buddhism's demise from the subcontinent sometime around the 11th or 12th century CE. The designation "mainstream" also implicitly acknowledges that there were other developments in Buddhist thought and practice that were not generally accepted by adherents to the tradition at large. One of these developments in particular becomes dominant in East Asia; this is known as Mahāyāna Buddhism. We will cover this second form of Buddhism in the next chapter as we discuss the history of Chinese civilization. There is also a third general development in Buddhist history known as Vajrayana, or Tantric Buddhism that became dominant in the region of Tibet and Mongolia, we will not have time to touch on this school at this time. For now, this chapter will focus on Mainstream Buddhism.

The Biography of the Buddha

The earliest written records we have that describe the life of the Buddha, born with the name Siddhartha Gautama, and his path to awakening come several centuries after he is said to have lived. The most popular and widely known version of his life comes from a text called *Buddhacarita* (life of the Buddha) written by the poet Aśvaghoṣa around the 2nd century CE, more than five hundred years after his death. Rather than attempting to be an objective historical biography, the *Buddhacarita* is a hagiography, or idealized biography of a religious figure, designed to portray the Buddha as a unique individual who, through a series of events, discovers the truth of reality and begins to teach that truth to the world.

What are these series of events and what do they tell us about the teachings of Buddhism? First, the birth of the Buddha was heralded by miraculous events. Siddhartha's birth-mother conceives after dreaming that a white elephant enters into her womb; ten months later her son (the future Buddha) is painlessly born through her side, rather than through the birth canal; after his birth, the baby walks in the four directions and declares that this is his last rebirth; heavenly signs, earthquakes, divine visitors, and other supernatural phenomenon also occurred marking his presence.

Brahmin priests divined these miraculous omens and told the baby's father that they foretold either future glory as a world-conquering king or as a religious teacher that would reveal the true Dharma leading to ultimate Awakening and release from the cycle of reincarnation. His father, being so in love with his son that he could not bear to be parted from him and being afraid that if he followed the religious path it would mark the end of his lineage, caused that his son should be entertained with the best luxuries of the world and kept separate from the bustle and evils of everyday life so as not to stir up any thoughts of distress that would lead him towards the ascetic life.

Siddhartha Gautama, who was raised apart from the normal activities of the world, showed himself to be extremely intelligent, well-behaved, virtuous, and noble in every way. He was married and eventually became a father to his own son. At this point in time his curiosity about life outside the palace grew and he persuaded his father to allow him to travel through the city. His father agreed, but only after he was able to secretly clear the city of anything that might cause him distress.

However, the gods had a different plan designed for Siddharth. On his journey the gods caused him to behold three sights: a sick man, an old man, and a dead man. At the sight of these three things he suddenly became aware of the inevitability of sickness, old age, and death. This

perturbed his mind so much that he could no longer find delight in his daily activities and luxuries. He found a quiet place to contemplate the things that he saw and while meditating is visited by an ascetic who explains that release from the evils of the world can be found by leaving society and engaging in austerities. At this pronouncement the monk then disappears into the heavens and is revealed to be a heavenly messenger.

Through these experiences the Buddha resolves to leave his family and home and become a wandering ascetic. For six years he engages in severe austerities according to the path prescribed by the teachings of Brahmanical Hinduism. After his body wastes away from such extreme austerities, he comes to the realization that he is no closer to true release from the evils of saṃsāra then when he started. He comes to the conclusion that this is because when the body is pushed to such extremes it is impossible for the mind to properly meditate and gain understanding. So he resolves on a middle-path: a renunciant lifestyle without severe austerities to the body. After bathing himself and eating a full meal Siddhartha sat under a tree and resolved not to move until obtaining full release from the cycle of rebirth.

During his meditation he is tempted multiple times by the evil god Mara, who seeks to disrupt his contemplation so as to keep people ignorant and trapped in saṃsāra. In all cases the Buddha rejects his temptations of lust, fear, and desire. In due process of time, through meditation he sees all of his previous lives and the process of cause and effect throughout those lives leading to his final rebirth. He is also able to see the lives of all living beings and becomes aware that every act has a corresponding consequence and that ultimately this is the cause for why people are stuck in the cycle of rebirth. At this realization Siddhartha Gautama finally awakens to the true reality of existence and becomes the Buddha, the Awoken One. And what is the true reality of our existence according to the Buddha? This is found in what are known as the Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths

1. Life is suffering (Duḥkha)
2. There is a cause for that suffering (desire caused by ignorance of true reality)
3. Suffering can be overcome (cessation – nirvāṇa)
4. There is a path that can be followed to overcome that suffering (Eightfold Path)

The first of the Four Noble Truths is that life is suffering. The Sanskrit word that is often translated here into "suffering" is *Duḥkha* (Pali: *Dukkha*). But this can be a misleading translation as it might convey the thought that the Buddha is arguing that life is miserable and unbearable from the point of view of physical pain and illness. But this is not how the tradition takes the meaning of *Duḥkha*. Indeed, the very biography of the Buddha itself denotes that life can be pleasurable and full of wonderful experiences. Rather, what Buddhism argues by the meaning of the term *Duḥkha* is unsatisfactoriness or angst. That is to say the inherent physical, psychological, and emotional pain that comes from all experiences due to the transitory and ephemeral nature of our existence.

Indeed, as the Buddha argues, the very cause of that "suffering" or existential angst is that fact that we desire the sensory and emotional pleasures that come with existence but which we cannot maintain indefinitely. All things change and eventually the things that we take pleasure in will disappear, our good health will wane, our friends and family will die and leave us, and eventually we will grow old, get sick, and die ourselves. At the root of this desire to hold

on to those things we hold most dear is ignorance; ignorance of the reality of our existence. The Buddha argues that we conceive of ourselves as eternal and unchanging beings. In particular he is referencing the notion of the *atman* as found in many of the *Upaṇiṣads* that we discussed earlier in this chapter. Indeed, the Buddha argues that he attempted to find the *atman* through the prescribed methods of austerities and meditation but was unable to discover anything which was eternally unchanging within himself. Yet, despite this fact, people still try to cling to the things they desire and love most in the vain effort to hold on to something that by nature must change and disappear. Whether it is wealth, health, family, or pleasure everything we desire (to both possess or to avoid) will eventually slip through our fingers. And that, so the Buddha argues, is suffering (*Duḥkha*).

Yet the Buddha does not argue that this existence is hopeless or doomed to oblivion. Rather, there is hope and the possibility for the cessation of suffering. This must come through the cessation of karma: the natural consequences that arise from every action that we take as human beings. The Buddha's notion of karma is very similar to the notion previously discussed above but with a few slight additions. For the Buddha, karma stems not just from our actions that keep us rooted in the cycle of reincarnation; it arises from our intentions and our thoughts. Thus if you have the intention to kill someone but are unable to do so because of circumstance there is still a consequence associated with that thought and intention that sets the individual along a certain path with inevitable consequences. Karma is thus like the fuel that we burn towards a particular trajectory that will lead either to liberation from *saṃsāra* or keep us within the endless cycle of suffering that comes with continual rebirth in this existence. Yet, all is not hopeless. The Buddha, by discovering the Four Noble Truths and overcoming the ignorance of existence, has discovered a path that leads to final release: *nirvāṇa*.

Nirvāṇa literally means to "blow out" or "snuff out" as in extinguishing the flame of a candle. In fact, one of the images that is used to describe *nirvāṇa* in Buddhist texts is the extinguishing of the effects of karma similar to the blowing out of a candle; when the cessation of karma and its effects is achieved so is *nirvāṇa*. This cessation is typically understood as the ending of the three poisons: desire, delusion (ignorance) and hatred. When an individual purifies themselves from these three poisons they have in effect attained a state in which the accrual of karma is "snuffed out" and all that is left for them is finish burning the rest of the karma that they have already achieved in previous lives. In the Mainstream tradition that took root in South Asia, achieving this state is known as becoming an *arhat*, or worthy one, and is often described as obtaining enlightenment. When a person achieves this state they are guaranteed to escape the cycle of reincarnation.

And how does one attain this cessation and find *nirvāṇa*? The fourth Noble Truth delineates the path that a Buddhist must follow in order to begin this path towards enlightenment. This path is most often described as the eight-fold path and involves both moral actions as well as the practice of meditation.

- Right View
- Right Intention
- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Livelihood
- Right Effort
- Right Mindfulness (memory/awareness)

- Right Concentration (meditation)

By following rules of ethical behavior and discipline of the mind through meditation, one can break the chains of ignorance and gain control of desire and hatred. Indeed, it is important to point out that for the Buddha one cannot begin the path of meditation without first correcting their actions to a moral and ethical code. To do this, all Buddhists are required to take upon themselves five prohibitions: to avoid all lying, stealing, killing, drunkenness, and sexual immorality.

To help those who accepted his teachings progress along this path towards *nirvāṇa*, The Buddha established a monastic order – known as the *saṅgha*. While becoming a monk was not required of everyone that accepted Buddhism, joining the *saṅgha* provided the right atmosphere to best progress towards enlightenment; providing opportunities to develop moral actions and engage in meditation. As a monk, you were not only required to follow the five prohibitions but also accept a large number of additional rules and requirements designed to further refine your ethical actions; these additional rules include such things as not eating after noon, avoiding improper entertainment such as singing and dancing, and a prohibition on handling money. Becoming a monk is the ultimate acceptance of the Buddha's teaching because it is essentially an act of following the Buddha's footsteps. A monk is supposed to cut off all ties with their previous life, including family and other social obligations so that they can concentrate on their personal development through meditation and overcome the desires and attachments that keep us stuck in ignorance and the cycle of reincarnation. To set out on the path to become a monk is a simple matter of becoming a novice by taking refuge in the three jewels of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings of the Buddha), and the *Saṅgha* (monastic order).

After achieving enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, the Buddha is said to have traveled to a place known as deer park near the city of Sarnath (close to modern day Varanasi/Benares) where he preached his first sermon on the Four Noble Truths to the five mendicants that had engaged in austerities with Siddhartha prior to his awakening. These five men became his first disciples and constituted the beginning of the *saṅgha*. From these first few disciples Buddhism continues to grow. The Buddha spent the next 45 years of his life traveling and teaching his Dharma to all those who would hear him until his death at the age of eighty. At this point, the tradition tells us, the Buddha enters final *nirvāṇa* and escapes the cycle of *saṃsāra*, never to be reborn again.

There are several things that we can learn from this hagiography written by Aśvaghoṣa. First, that this text is intentionally portraying the Buddha within the traditional world of Vedic and Brahmanical Hinduism. The Buddha participates in the traditional rituals and worldview of the Vedic world, accepts the gods and ideas that are predominant in the times. Second, by portraying the Buddha in such a way, Aśvaghoṣa is attempting to make Buddhism more acceptable to a broader South Asia world, particularly that of Royal court culture through his use of sophisticated poetry and language. And finally, that while trying to portray the Buddha as part of the broader Vedic worldview it also rejects some of the basic ideas common to it. Particularly, the Buddha rejects the *āśramas* and the notion that extreme asceticism can lead to release from *saṃsāra*. The text explicitly shows that Siddhartha Gautama participated in that path and personally found that it did not work. Instead, he was able to find a "middle-path" between the two extremes of hedonism (a life of luxury and pleasure) and severe austerities. This middle-path ultimately comes to reject the basic teachings of Brahmanical Hinduism: the reality of the *atman*, the eternal-self. Instead, the Buddha argues for what he calls *anatman*, meaning no-eternal-self.

By this, the Buddha rejects the basic premise of an eternal, unchanging, essence within each individual that is really just a part of the eternal Brahman, the underlying essence and nature of the universe from which all creation springs. Instead, the Buddha teaches that there is no *atman* but because we can't bear to think of ourselves as anything but eternal and unchanging we hold onto those things that we desire as if we were unchanging and eternal beings. This is the fundamental ignorance that sets the stage for our unending desire and attachment as sentient beings that keeps us in the cycle of rebirth. For the Buddha, letting go of the conceit of an eternal self is the very means by which we become *self-less* people and are able to help others along their own path to enlightenment.

The development of Buddhism creates additional tension with the religious and social life of South Asian civilization. We now have those that argue for strict adherence to dharma, those that advocate a complete social withdrawal to obtain liberation, and those that reject both sides and advocate a middle path. Is it possible to resolve these differences or must society be pulled apart between these divergent views? It is true that many chose to follow one tradition and reject all the others. But what about those that saw the value that each position presented? Was there a way to fulfil one's dharma without engaging in extreme asceticism and still obtain a form of release from *saṃsāra*? Over time a new position developed that is best represented in the text of the *Bhagavad-Gita* that attempted to merge the various ideas into a comprehensive solution.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* (ca. 200 BCE – 400 CE) represents one attempt to syncretize various strands of South Asian religious thought and philosophy into a cohesive system of practice. It accomplishes this by representing the, as yet, diverse religious obligations as three parallel paths available to the individual. These three paths are:

- Karma (duty and action)
- Jñana (wisdom)
- Bhakti (devotion)

The *Gita* acknowledges the need for action in this world as well as the importance of obtaining wisdom through meditative and ascetic-like practices. But, the text ultimately emphasizes the path of Bhakti, or devotion, as the most effective and reliable solution to the problem of reincarnation and the tension between social obligations and ascetic withdrawal. This influences a new period of development in South Asian religious thought and practice often termed Bhakti (devotional) Hinduism. This form of practice is characterized by intense ritual devotion, prayers, and offerings to the gods (or a particular god) in a practice known as *puja*. Puja is designed to create a specific bond between the devotee and deity that ultimately allows the individual to face and overcome the hardships of life and escape the cycle of reincarnation.

Classical South Asia

South Asian history consists of a diverse political, religious, linguistic, and cultural mixture of peoples and ideas that are perhaps better characterized by their differences than by their similarities. This is particularly true in respect to its intellectual and political history. While this chapter has so far focused on the development of ideas in South Asia, we will also want to spend some time discussing the ways in which those ideas impacted the government, laws, art, and literature of the region. These developments, from roughly the beginning of the Mauryan

dynasty to the end of the Gupta Empire, culminate in enduring models of practice, thought, and society in South Asian civilization that we can refer to generally as Classical South Asia.

Despite the fact that South Asia is often thought of and represented as a homogenous cultural region, its actual history represents a very fractured and diverse population. If the previous discussion on the developments of South Asian thought and religion tells us anything it's that various people throughout South Asian history did not agree on most things, despite efforts to create a stable social structure as represented in the varṇa system. This diversity becomes particularly apparent when we look at the history of politics and government throughout the region from the earliest periods that can perhaps most generously be described as "chaotic" at best. The great diversity of small, regional kingdoms scattered throughout the region around 600 BCE to 300 BCE – often referred to as the Mahajanapada period – best characterizes the reality of social division throughout South Asia.

Indeed, it is not until the founding of the Mauryan Empire in 322 BCE that the vast majority of South Asia is first unified under a central government structure. This political unity under the Mauryan Empire, while extremely important, was short lived and was only repeated one other time by native rulers (the Gupta Empire discussed below) until the founding of the modern nation-state of India in 1947.

Mauryan Empire

The impressive campaign of the Macedonia prince, Alexander the Great, was an indirect factor in the founding of the Mauryan Empire. As Alexander pressed into South Asia following his conquest of the Achaemenid Persian Empire (see Chapter 2) he began to take over or ally himself with several of the smaller kingdoms that existed in the North Indus River valley. This campaign into South Asia was short lived, as his army essentially rebelled and forced Alexander to return to the West. Following his death in 323 BCE, Alexander's empire fell apart and was carved into pieces by his generals. This led to a shift in power in South Asia that provided the opportunity for Chandragupta Maurya to begin a military campaign to unify the diverse kingdoms of the period into a single empire. This also marks the beginning of interaction between Western Greek speaking kingdoms and South Asia that had major implications in the developments of art, literature, government, and science in both the East and the West.

The Mauryan Empire reached its height under the rule of its third king, Ashoka the Great (r. ca. 269 – 232 BCE). The early period of his reign is marked by a massive expansion of the empire into the Southern regions of the subcontinent. His military campaigns were so violent and he was seen as such a bloodthirsty tactician that he was referred to as Ashoka the Fierce. It was after the military campaign against the region of Kalinga that Ashoka finally unified South Asia under his rule. The Battle of Kalinga is, so the sources tell us, where Ashoka also had a final change of heart from a fierce warrior to a virtuous king. At the sight of all the death and suffering as a result of his military conquests Ashoka converted to Buddhism.

The remainder of Ashoka's reign is marked by one of peace and stability. Under his patronage major public works, such as roads, wells, and temples were completed for the benefit of his people. Ashoka was particularly supportive in the building of Buddhist burial mounds, called stupas, for the dissemination of Buddhist relics throughout his kingdom. This was accompanied by a massive movement of Buddhist monks throughout the region and into the West, including a contingent of monks to the island of Sri Lanka off the Southern coast. Sri

Lanka is now home to the last vestige of Buddhism in the region that gave it birth. Ashoka also carved a number of statements and edicts onto large stones or erected pillars throughout the entirety of his empire. These rock and pillar edicts are our first written sources from South Asia. The Ashokan pillars are also distinctive for their artistic merit showing a lion sitting atop a Dharma wheel and lotus blossom – all symbols relating to Buddhist teachings. The lion capitals of the Ashokan pillars were later adopted as the official emblem of India; evidence of the influence and prestige that the reign of Ashoka still holds in South Asia today.

Gupta Empire

The end of the Mauryan Empire in the second century BCE to the founding of the next great Empire – the Gupta Empire in 320 CE – is marked by continued movement of various groups from the Northwestern region into the Subcontinent. Included among these immigrants were various Greek speaking people from the region of Bactria (remnants from Alexander the Great's empire) and nomads such as the Yuezhi who fled from conflict with the Chinese and Xiongnu in East and Central Asia. This movement led to numerous smaller kingdoms and constant social upheaval. It also led to great economic, religious, and artistic developments – stirring the cultural pot of the region as China would engage in trade with India and Rome via the Silk Road through Central Asia. This intermingling of Greek, South Asia, Central Asian and Chinese cultures led to the development of new styles of art (as exemplified in the famous art from the region of Gandhara), the further spread of Buddhism, and continued development and compilation of Hindu law codes that sought to reestablish traditional social norms in response to the political upheaval and competition from other religious traditions. So while this period after the end of the Mauryan Empire is often referred to as a "dark period" in South Asian history due to its political instability it was also a time of great development before the establishment of the great Classical period of South Asia: The Gupta Empire.

The Gupta Empire was founded in 320 CE by Chandragupta but it was his son, Samudragupta, who brought the Empire to prominence and began to unify the vast majority of South Asia under Gupta rule – though mostly as tributary or vassal states rather than through direct control. Though it exerted some control, either directly or indirectly, over much of South Asia it failed to dominate the entire region. Nevertheless, it did establish a political structure and social, artistic, and literary trends that became standard models for many of the succeeding kingdoms after its decline in 550 CE.

The Gupta Empire reached its pinnacle under the next king, Chandragupta II (ca. 380 – 415 CE). Under Chandragupta II's reign the arts, architecture, literature, and sciences flourishes and set a standard for the height of Classical South Asian civilization. Interestingly, during his reign a Buddhist pilgrim named Faxian traveled through South Asia and left a detailed description of his journey. He described the reign of Chandragupta II as marked by one of peace, economic prosperity, and religious tolerance. But it is the flourishing of Sanskrit literature that has traditionally been categorized as the true riches that remain from the Gupta Empire.

The poet Kālidāsa is universally accepted as the greatest literary figure in classical South Asian society. Though his dates are unknown, he is generally regarded as probably having lived during the reign of Chandragupta II. Kālidāsa is most famous as a dramatist and poet whose writings act as the greatest example of Sanskrit literature and exert a tremendous influence on subsequent poets and authors. Perhaps his most famous work is the play *Śakuntala*

(*Abhijñānaśakuntalam*) that describes a king who falls in love with and marries the adopted daughter of a forest sage. When he is summoned back to court, the king leaves his new bride giving her his signet ring and asking her to follow him when she can. After accidentally offending a forest sage, the now pregnant Śakuntala is cursed to have her new husband forget who she is until he sees his signet ring. Then, as fate would have it, she loses the ring and is turned away from her husband who has forgotten her. Through a series of events the ring is discovered by a fisherman who returns it to the king who then remembers his beautiful bride and immediately seeks out and recovers his lost love.

Kālidāsa's plays and poems typically deal with issues of lost and rekindled love – particularly love between what at first glance seem unequal partners but that turn out to be proper relationships between members of the same class. His writings are often looked to as the standards for classical understanding of the nature of love and beauty. And his use of language, rhyme and metre in his poetry are still seen as the greatest pinnacle of Sanskrit literature and are emblematic of the height of culture and learning achieved during the Gupta Empire.

The end of the Gupta Empire by 550 BCE once again leads to another period of political instability in the region marked by numerous smaller kingdoms – some of which manage to dominate large regions in South Asia but never accomplish full political unification. It is not until the advent of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206 CE under Muslim rule that broader political stability is again achieve in the Region. Indeed, it is not until the British Empire that the entirety of South Asia is really unified under one government again.

Conclusion

The history of South Asian civilization from the IVC and Aryan migration through the Classical age of the Gupta Empire can perhaps be best evaluated through the tension between social duties and spiritual attainment. Much of the writing and scholarly endeavors of this period attempt to resolve this tension and seek answers to the fundamental questions of human existence and suffering as they understood it. Even though there were some generally accepted elements to the South Asian world-view there was also a great diversity of ideas and practices that developed in relation to these notions ranging from the emphasis on social obligations found in the Vedic texts to the complete rejection of these ideas by renunciant traditions such as Buddhism. And while South Asian civilization of this early period is also marked by numerous migrations and political upheaval, there were also great strides in the art, literature, and culture that exerted a great deal of influence outside of its own region, particularly in Southeast and East Asia. Buddhism is one of the greatest examples of this influence that we will see in the next chapter as we discuss Chinese civilization.

PART V

The Middle East and Islamic Civilizations

CHAPTER 15

From Muhammad Through the High caliphate

> "If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astonishing results are the three criteria of a human genius, who could dare compare any great man in history with Muhammad?" Alphonse de Lamartine (*History of Turkey*, vol. 1, 154)

Introduction

Muhammad is among the most influential—and most controversial—personalities in history. As the founding prophet of the world's one billion-plus Muslims, he is held by them in high esteem as the seal of all Allah's prophets, and as the exemplar *par excellence* of the religious life. At another extreme, he is seen in very negative terms or held in derision by others who draw attention to his numerous marriages, rocky relations with certain Jewish tribes of Medina. No matter which view one holds (or any combination of views), historians widely acknowledge his lasting and deep influence. As Lamartine (above) suggests, Muhammad:

- Aspired to great purposes, which tradition holds include (1) the re-establishment of an original Abrahamic faith (See chapter _____ on Israelite religion, and chapter ____ on Christianity in Late Antiquity), and, (2) the creation of a just and equitable social order based upon creed rather than blood ties alone;
- Made a great deal from a "smallness of means." He was an orphan, in need of protection––no one would likely have seen in him the seeds of a new global faith, or that this new faith called Islam would emerge from the backwater town of Mecca and would challenge existing faiths and empires; and,
- Achieve truly astonishing results which include civilizational achievements made by Muslim thinkers, such as the invention of Algebra and Trigonometry, advancements in medicine and the clinical hospital, as well as theories on germs, techniques in optics, or the establishment of numerous world-class empires across a span of more than a thousand years.

This chapter will explore the history of the Middle East in light of the deep and lasting influence of Muhammad and Islam.

Periods and Themes

The chapter is divided into the following main historical periods:

- Muhammad and the founding of Islam (570-632 CE)
- The *Rashidun* Caliphate (632-661)
- The Umayyad Empire (661-750)
- The Early Abbasid Empire (750-945)
- The Late Abbasid Empire (945-1260)

The following themes are introduced and discussed:

- Sources of authority, practice, and faith in Islam
- Sectarian Division: Sunnis and Shi'ism

Muhammad and the Founding of Islam

Muhammad, the founding prophet of Islam, was born in the town of Mecca, in about 570 CE. His father died before his birth, and his mother died when he was six years old. A lone orphan within a traditional tribal society, he was given protection and minimal social standing first by his grandfather Abdullah, and later by his uncle Abu Talib. He married the owner of a caravan, a widow named Khadija—she was about fifteen years older than he, and she proposed marriage. So long as Abu Talib and Khadija lived, Muhammad was able to freely function in Meccan society. Consequently, he was able, during their lives, to morally critique his own society and to preach his own religious views. The death of Khadija and Abu Talib (in 619) removed these protections and resulted in his expulsion from Mecca in 622 due to his growing unpopularity among the Meccan elite who did not appreciate his social critiques, or his new faith. Muhammad lived the remainder of his life in a different city, called Yathrib (or Medina) until his death in 632. Muhammad's life is divided then into two major periods, reflecting his time in Mecca (570-622) and in Yathrib/Medina (622-632).

The Prophet of Mecca (570-622)

Mecca was a small trading town located in the western Arabian Peninsula, near a chain of mountains bordering the Red Sea, called the Hijaz. Mecca was an oasis town located amidst some of the world's most inhospitable deserts. In addition to its importance as a trading stop, the town was also home to several major religious cults, and a structure known as the Ka'aba (or "cube"). . Islamic tradition credits Ibrahim (English, "Abraham," who lived c. 1800 BCE) and his son Isma'il (English, "Ishmael") with the founding of Mecca, and is described in the 14th *sura* (English, "Chapter") of the Qur'an. The town was also an important polytheist cultic center, and hosted a month-long religious festival each year that attracted large numbers of pilgrims from throughout the region. The town's most powerful tribe, called Quraysh, was divided into clans, including the very powerful clan of Umayya and the clan of Hashim. We will have more to say about these two clans later in the chapter.

Muslims hold that, by the time of Muhammad's birth Mecca had become immoral and unjust, having forgotten Allah, the omnipotent god of Abraham, and having worshipped idols in Allah's place. This period, known by Muslims as the *jahaliyya*, or "Age of Ignorance," was filled with injustice toward the weaker members of society (widows, orphans, and the impoverished), while exalting the power and decadence of the wealthy. As an orphan it is easy to see why Muhammad would condemn injustices involving the weak and marginal members of society. At an early age, Muhammad became engaged in a quest for personal spiritual enlightenment and a revival of religious ethics. Meditating and praying in the nearby mountain caves, Muhammad claimed a series of revelations from Allah that constitute the holy book of Islam, the Qur'an. Here are the key events of Muhammad's life in Mecca:

- 610 CE—Muhammad's revelations began in the Cave of Mt. Hira, on the Night of Power. Gabriel, an angel, appeared to Muhammad and commanded him to recite that "there is no god but Allah," the core monotheistic message of Islam. Muhammad

returned home and explained the revelation to his wife, Khadija (his first convert) and to close family and friends. The nascent Muslim community was formed.

- 613 CE—Muhammad, a member of the clan of Hashim—began to openly preach about his revelations, which now included commandments about the correct treatment of widows, orphans, and the impoverished, as well as a condemnation of polytheism. These messages were accepted by some Meccans, but were rejected by powerful members of the society—especially among powerful and wealthy persons in the clan of Umayya. Muhammad's teachings against polytheism were regarded as an economic threat, targeting the wealth made during the month of polytheist pilgrimage. Tensions mounted over the next few years, and the persecution of unprotected Muslim converts began.
- 619 CE— Khadija and Abu Talib died, and Muhammad's personal safety was threatened. He subsequently met with leaders from the nearby town of Yathrib (about 250 miles north of Mecca), who invited Muhammad to relocate in Yathrib and arbitrate the town's growing tribal disputes. Many Muslims began to relocate to Yathrib.
- 622 CE—Muhammad and the remaining Muslims of Mecca fled to Yathrib, an event known as the *Hijra* (English, the "Flight"). Muhammad became the governor of Yathrib, and the town was eventually renamed *madinat al-nabi* (English, "City of the Prophet," or simply "Medina"). Thus began the second major period of Muhammad's life.

Prophet and Statesman: Muhammad in Medina (622-632)

Scottish historian W. Montgomery Watt (1906-2006) called Muhammad a prophet and a statesman. Muhammad's prophetic career began in Mecca on the Night of Power in 610, but he took charge of a city-state while receiving additional revelations about its regulation and governance beginning in 622, thereupon becoming a prophet and a statesman. The *hijra* was later made the founding year of the Islamic calendar— 1 AH, or year one of the *Anno Hejira*.

Medina was at that time home to several tribes, including both Arab and Jewish tribes. Muhammad promulgated a basic law in 622, called the Constitution of Medina, which regulated relations among the tribes, an important act of statesmanship. The Constitution served many purposes. It resolved the tribal conflict and war in medina between the Banu Aws (English, "Tribe of Aws") and the Banu Khazraj, helping to end a period of inter-tribal war and internal violence. The Constitution provided further that there should be religious freedom in the city, and that Medina was *haram* (English, "sacred"), that there should be no blood shed among the tribes or peoples of the town, and provided for a system of common defense and for taxation in time of war. The Constitution defined a Medinan *umma* (English, "Community") that should always support and defend itself without regard to Arab or Jew, or to tribal affiliation. In addition to the basic law of the city, the Constitution of Medina, Muhammad claimed revelations on subjects such as divorce and inheritance, which applied to his followers, adding to his status as statesman.

Tensions between Mecca and Medina under Muhammad remained high. Both towns were located across common trade routes, and competition turned to warfare between them. A series of battles were fought between the forces of Mecca, sometimes commanded by Abu Sufyan, an important leader from the clan of Umayya, and Muhammad, the leader of Medina: the battles of Badr (624), Uhud (625), and The Trench (627). During the Battle of the Trench, one of the Jewish tribes, called the Banu Qurayza, sided with the Meccan Confederation, and attacked Muhammad's forces. Following the end of the battle, members of the Banu Qurayza were exiled

from Medina and all the tribe's men were executed for treason against the city and its constitution. In 628, Muhammad and the Meccans entered into the Treaty of Hudabiyya, set to last for ten years. The Meccans allegedly violated the treaty, and Abu Sufyan was sent to re-negotiate the terms of Hudabiyya—an effort that failed. In 630, Muhammad's armies entered and took control of Mecca without bloodshed. Abu Sufyan converted to Islam in connection with the conquest in 630, and became a noted Muslim commander from then until his death in 650. Muhammad, having subdued and conquered Mecca and much of the Arabian Peninsula died in 632, leaving no instructions for appointing a successor.

The "Rashidun" Caliphate (632-661 CE)

Muhammad's death produced a crisis of leadership among Muslims. Tradition holds that one group favored the selection of a leader of proven skill, a Muslim of renown, and Companion of the Prophet Muhammad. This manner of selection, emphasizing experience and skill, accorded with tribal concepts of leadership, and would resonate with many Muslims since they were members of tribes and would understand this form of selection. Another group advocated the election of Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib (601-661, son of Muhammad's uncle, Abu Talib), as the rightful successor, emphasizing a sacred bloodline descending from the Prophet. The term for "successor" is *khalifa* (English, "Caliph"). Abu Bakr (r. 632-634), a close companion of Muhammad and the father of another of Muhammad's wives—Aisha bint Abi Bakr (613-678)—was made Caliph in 632.

The supporters of Ali (called the *shiatu Ali*, or shi'ites) were disappointed, and refused to renounce their claim to Ali as the rightful successor to Muhammad. We will discuss the Shi'ites in more detail later in this chapter. Sunni Muslims, or Sunnites as they are now called, hold that Abu Bakr and the next three Caliphs were the rightful successors to Muhammad. Together these first four Caliphs are called the *rashidun*, or "Righteous" Caliphs. Their collective rule is widely regarded by Sunni Muslims as an ideal, Golden Age of Islamic governance and rule.

These are the four *rashidun* Caliphs, each with a brief description of accomplishments:

- Abu Bakr (r. 632-634). Although his reign was very short, Abu Bakr functioned as a role model for the ideal Caliph. Following the death of Muhammad, several tribes declared their independence from the state Muhammad created, essentially urging that their covenant was with Muhammad personally, and not with Allah. Bakr dispatched and army to deal with these tribes in a series of battles called the wars of *ridda* (apostasy), and eventually restored the Muslim state throughout much of Arabia. Additionally, Abu Bakr organized the first campaigns into Syria and regions outside of Arabia.
- Umar (r. 634-644). Umar oversaw the most dynamic single period of state expansion in Islamic history. He sent General Khalid ibn al-Walid (c. 585-642) northward into Syria in 634-644, taking from the Byzantine Romans the region of Jerusalem at the Battle of Ajnadayn (634), and the area of Damascus at the Battle of Yarmuk (636). He then moved Eastward, securing southern Mesopotamia in the Battle of Qadisiyya , moving eastward to capture the core territories of the Sassanid Persian Empire, capturing the capital city of Ctesiphon in 641. Umar organized a second army under General Amr ibn al-As, who moved against the Byzantine forces in Egypt in 639, and completed its conquest in 641 with the surrender of Alexandria to Arab forces. Umar had tripled the size of the Arab state in less than a decade, effectively destroying the Sassanian Empire and weakening

the Byzantine Romans. The area of expansion covered the modern nations of Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and western Iran.

In addition to overseeing the rapid expansion of the nascent Islamic Empire, Umar is traditionally credited with establishing the guidelines for making terms of peace with conquered peoples. When Jerusalem was surrounded by Muslim armies in 637, Sephronius, a Christian Patriarch, offered to surrender the city on condition that the Caliph negotiate in person with him at Jerusalem. The resulting treaty is known as the *Pact of Umar*. The Pact referred to the Christians of Jerusalem as *dhimmis* ("Protected Persons") granted legal status and protection. In exchange, the Christians of Jerusalem paid the *jizya* tax—this tax was not an innovation since a tax upon persons protected by a tribe or nation, but foreign to it, predated Islam. The reader should take note that—contrary to uninformed contemporary claims that Islam was forcibly spread at the point of the sword—non-Muslims were in fact widely protected in their faith.

Conversion to Islam was, for most persons now under imperial rule, voluntary. With the exception of the North African Berbers and the Persians who voluntarily converted within a generation (see below), conversion was extremely gradual. It took nearly two centuries for a Muslim majority to form in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Christians could continue to practice their religion, but could not build new churches, monasteries or similar structures without permission. Other restrictions included the wearing of a special belt that identified them as non-Muslims, showing public deference to Muslims, and other restrictions related to diet (pigs, forbidden to Muslims, could not be raised near Muslim dwellings or structures), and non-Muslims were prohibited from selling alcohol to Muslims (the consumption alcohol is forbidden in Islam). There is historical evidence that Christians and other *ahl al-kitab* ("People of the Book") such as Jews and Zoroastrians, accepted the *jizya* tax readily since it was lower then existing taxes charged by the previous rulers, and that in some cases the tax was resisted. The significance of the *jizya* tax with respect to *dhimmi* converts to Islam is presented below.

- Uthman (r. 644-656) was the third of the *rashidun* Caliphs, and the first from the clan of Umayya (as opposed to Muhammad's clan of Hashim), making him a kinsman of Abu Sufyan (see above). Uthman was an early convert to Islam, a companion of Muhammad and his son-in-law (having married two of Muhammad's daughters). Uthman instituted needed reforms, including a more centralized administration and system of appointed governors intended to replace the more loose tribal confederation that marked the early conquests. This had two destabilizing effects. First, Uthman appointed his own relatives to provincial governorate, such as Abu Sufyan's son Muawiyya, who later ruled as Caliph (see below), alienating members of the clan of Hashim. Second, Uthman continued the prior policy of not allowing soldiers to take land away from conquered owners. Uthman extended the Caliphal domain westward into North Africa, and Eastward into the Sind (modern Pakistan and western India), but less loot came from these expeditions. Soldiers increasingly resented Uthman's restrictions on looting land and the decrease in booty, leading to revolt in the 650s. Rebellion and discontent nearly led to civil war. Ultimately, Uthman was forced to make a stand at his residence in Medina, under guard of al-Zubayr, a famous warrior, and Hassan and Hussein the grandsons of Muhammad. Rebels entered the house from an unanticipated entrance and killed the Caliph, inaugurating a period of civil war called the first *fitna*.

Uthman's most enduring contribution to Islam was not in conquest, but in providing a standard version of the Quran. Revelations recorded on dried palm leaves or the skins of animals were collected and the memories of companions were recorded. The Quran forms the basis of Islamic law and theology, and Uthman's standard text played a prominent role in the stable development of Islam.

- Ali (r. 656-661), Muhammad's companion, cousin, son-in-law was the fourth and final *rashidun* Caliph. A significant number of Muslims believed that Ali should have been Muhammad's successor, and that the successor be a member of the *ahl al-bayt* ("people of the house" of Muhammad). Although Ali enjoyed respect and support, he became caliph at a critical time, in the middle of an inter-clan blood feud. The clan of Umayya demanded that Ali avenge the assassination of Uthman, their kinsman, and punishment of those responsible. In addition to this, Ali faced a combined threat from Muawiyya (the Governor of Syria, and the son of Abu Sufyan) and from Muhammad's youngest wife, Aisha. Meeting near Basra in modern Iraq to negotiate with the rebels, Ali was drawn into the Battle of the Camel (656, named after Aisha who rode a camel into battle against Ali). This marked the beginning of the first *fitna*, or civil war, where Muslim fought against Muslim for control of the Caliphate. In this battle, it may be argued, the concept of a unified *umma* failed, as old tribal tensions and feuds prevailed over bonds between Muslim against Muslim. Ali effectively won the battle, but the threat of civil strife did not end. He was assassinated while praying at a mosque near Kufa, located in modern Iraq, and became a martyr for many Muslims. His death initiated a long-term conflict between his supporters—called the *shiatu Ali*, the partisans of Ali, or in simplified form, the Shi'ites, and those Muslims favoring the election of Caliphs outside of Muhammad's family, called Sunnites. Ali's assassination also marked the end of the golden age of the *rashidun*. Leaders among the clan of Umayya took control of the growing Islamic Empire in 661, and moved in entirely new directions.

The Umayyad Caliphate (661–750)

Under the leadership of Muawiya I (r. 661-680, son of Abu Sufyan), members of the clan of Umayya—originally from Mecca—took control of the state as Caliphs in 661. They moved the capital from Medina in the Arabian Desert to Damascus (among the most ancient cities in the word and a major trade center in Syria), locating the growing empire's administrative center along established trade routes and providing a more reliable means of transportation and communication throughout the region. Muawiya instituted the principle of dynastic rule (kingship within the family), and the Caliphate began to resemble the familiar patter of Near Eastern kingship. The Umayyad's principal achievements include the extension of the Empire rule into North Africa and Central Asia, and the creation of an administrative structure capable of administering this massive empire. Internal strife and rebellion, known as the second and third *fitn* (plural of *fitna*) ended the Umayyad dynasty's rule over the empire in 750, although a remnant of the royal family exercised rule over the territory of Iberia (modern Spain and Portugal) for several more centuries.

Territorial Expansion. The empire inherited by the Umayyads in 661 was already large in comparison with many previous empires in the region of the Near East. Under the Umayyads, the territory of the Empire was expanded eastward beyond Persia into Central Asia and the Sind (modern Pakistan and parts of India), and westward across North Africa, into Iberia (modern

Spain and Portugal), and into southern France. At its height, the Umayyad Empire stands among the five largest empires in world history, and was nearly three times as large as the ancient Roman Empire. It was said that it took a year to cross from one end of the empire to the other. This posed significant challenges to effective centralized rule that the Umayyads attempted to overcome by borrowing the techniques and leadership of other successful states (see below).

Conquest of Iberia (modern Spain, Portugal, and parts of southern France). The conquest of Iberia demonstrated Umayyad military capacities as well as the dependence upon non-Arab Muslims (called *mawali*, see below) in extending and maintaining the expanding Empire. In 711, an expeditionary force, led by a Berber commander named Tariq (after whom Gibraltar, or *Jabal Tariq*, is named) entered the Iberian Peninsula and quickly defeated the Visigoths. The governor of Africa dispatched a force of about 18,000 North African Berber soldiers under Arab command, and the conquest of the peninsula moved apace. Iberia had been under the overall control of the Visigoths from since 418, but civil war in the early 700's weakened Visigoth control, facilitating the conquest. The only effective resistance was made by a man named Pelayo—elected by the remaining Visigoths in the region of Asturias in northern Spain—resulting in an Umayyad defeat at the Battle of Covadonga (722). In 725 the Umayyads took the region of Narbonne (southern France). In 732 an expeditionary force was defeated at Poitiers (near modern Tours, France) by Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne (see chapter 4), marking the furthest advance into Europe in the West.

Western historians have customarily cited the Battle of Poitiers as one of the great decisive civilizational battles of history, a misperception that unfortunately remains popular today among less informed persons. Because of this misperception, the Battle of Poitiers deserves more detailed attention here. Couching the "Christian" victory at Poitiers some go so far as to claim that were it not for Charles Martel and the Carolingian rulers that followed him the world would have become Muslim, or that women living today would all wear a *burqaa* (full body veil) or that everyone in the West would now be speaking Arabic. These exaggerations are evidence of a pervasive and enduring anti-Islamic prejudice that has swayed even some of the most informed minds of the West for centuries. True, the Battle of Poitiers marks the westernmost territorial reach of the Empire but in fact Umayyad invaders could not have held the area even if they had been victorious over Martel. Recall that Arab imperial expansion began in 632 following the death of Muhammad and that Poitiers was a mere century later. Although the rapid conquest of one of the largest empires in history—eclipsing the Roman Empire in size—was genuinely remarkable, it was also a very serious drain on both human and material resources. The fact is that Umayyad forces could not have continued this scale of conquest. There simply wasn't the energy, focus, or resources necessary to mount a major campaign. Additionally, in the 640's Berber soldiers rebelled in Iberia—a prelude to the revolts in Persia and Mesopotamia that would end the Umayyad Caliphate in 750, less than ten years later. In any event Muslim control of Narbonne ended in 759 by Pepin the Short (son of Charles Martel), see chapter ____) ending all Muslim governance in Europe beyond the Iberian Peninsula. The emergence of Christian Europe in the Middle Ages was not seriously jeopardized by Muslim armies, and Poitiers—while important, perhaps even critical, to the political success of the coming Carolingian Dynasty and Charlemagne—was not decisive in a civilizational sense. In other words, had the Umayyad forced defeated Martel, it is likely that European civilization would have developed much the same as it did.

Subsequent Muslim dynasties governed significant regions of the Iberian Peninsula until 1492, when the armies of Queen Isabella of Castile (r. 1747-1504, see Chapter ___) conquered

the area of Andalucía (al-Andalus, or "Land of the Vandals") taking the famed Moorish city of Granada. Muslim governance of the region produced one of the most vibrant cultures of the European Middle Ages. Muslims, Christians, and Jews often cooperated in what is called *la convivencia* (the "living together" or the "getting along"), a period of overall peaceful conviviality and common culture under Muslim rule, centered in the city of Cordoba. The *convivencia* draws into doubt much of the myth of a supposedly inherent Muslim antipathy toward Jews and Christians.

Umayyad Administration.

The Umayyad caliphs faced staggering administrative responsibilities in governing their vast territory. In many areas of governance they succeeded, but the challenge ultimately proved insoluble. They adopted a Byzantine system of administration, adapting it to Islam as the governing ideology. Imperial administration was separated into three areas of authority: (1) tax collection and revenue distribution, (2) the military, and (3) religious affairs. Tax collection proved to be the most troublesome and divisive area of administration, leading to the downfall of the Umayyad Caliphate, as we will see. Several central councils, each called a *diwan*, supervised the enforcement of imperial policy throughout the state.

This centralized system of administration was largely administered through appointed provincial governors spread across the vast territory the Empire. Thus, in order to maintain strong central authority from Damascus, the Umayyad Caliphs became increasingly dependent upon provincial governors. Newly conquered territories required the creation of a provincial government for that region (for an example, see the conquest of North Africa, above). Each governor would in practice appoint and supervise local Islamic judges (individually called *qadi*), organize a police system, coordinate with the leaders of religious minorities, dispense justice personally, monitor the marketplace, appoint local military commanders and organize the provincial army, collect taxes and, in theory at least, pass along all revenues not needed for local administration to the capital in Damascus. As the empire grew and Damascus became increasingly distant from outlying provinces, the power of far-off governors increased, and more and more revenue remained in local hands. The decline of revenue in the early eighth century and the subsequent imposition of increased taxes helped promote the very social unrest and revolt that ended Umayyad rule.

The Second fitna.

The second *fitna* was a war between Yazid I—son of Muawiya—and Hussein, grandson of Muhammad and son of Caliph Ali and Muhammad's daughter, Fatima. You may recall that there were many Muslims who held that the Caliph should be a descendant of Muhammad, that is, a member of the *ahl al-bayt*, or "people of the house" of Muhammad. In order to understand this claim, and its significance in the second *fitna*, we need to return to Ali's death in 661. At the end of Ali's brief reign as Caliph (565-661) and following his assassination, a significant number of Muslims believed that the office of Caliph should have gone to his oldest son, Hasan (625-670), who was also Muhammad's grandson through his daughter Fatima (one of Ali's wives). Indeed, Hasan had been formally elected Caliph by means of a *shura* (council) following Ali's assassination—the same system that had appointed Umar, Uthman, and Ali as caliphs. Muawiyya, however, rejected the claim that Hasan should rule and asserted his own right to rule based upon his own claims of superior competence and experience, a argument that followed

long-standing tribal traditions for selecting leaders. Hasan abdicated the election and his right to be Caliph.

Following the death of Hasan in 675, Hussein, his younger brother declared his caliphate, and travelled with his family form medina to Kufa (located in modern Iraq). Before Hussein reached Kufa, the forces of Yazid I, Muawiyya's son and successor, surrounded Hussein and his party. Over the course of several days Yazid's army prevented Hussein's party—which included his family, and numerous women and children—access to water. On the tenth day of the month of Muharram Yazid's army attacked, and Hussein was beheaded.

Hussein's martyrdom and the death of so many in his family, called the Massacre at Karbala, served as a rallying point for the *shiatu Ali*, and became a decisive point in the historical development of Shi'ism. Each year, on the 10th of Muharram, tens of thousands of devout shi'ites gather at Karbala and mourn for the massacre and formally mourn the death of Hussein. Many that attend wear white death shrouds, and cut themselves, or beat themselves with chains, to witness their commitment to become martyrs for Shi'ism and Islam. The political potential of this ritual has not been lost on modern religious leaders, and Ayatollah Khomeini used the cult of martyrdom to successfully challenge the last Shah of Iran, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, in 1979. The second *fitna* played a decisive role in the formation is Shi'ism and plays an important religious and political role in the Islamic world today.

Mawali discontent and revolt

The Arab conquests under the *rashidun* were impressive, but largely confined to the Arab lands of the Middle East. Umayyad conquests moved well beyond the core lands of the Middle East, into North Africa and into Central Asia, bringing large numbers of non-Arabs under Islamic/Arab rule. It took hundreds of years for the non-Muslims of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq to convert to Islam, but Persians of Iran and Berbers of North Africa converted voluntarily, and quickly. Many of these converts came into Islam through an adoption into an Arab tribe. The converts were called *mawali* (adoptees). As conquered peoples, they had been *dhimmi* (protected non-Muslims) and consequently paid the *jizya* tax. Following their adoption and conversion, they expected to be treated as full Muslims in every way. That meant that they would no longer pay the *jizya*.

The Umayyads were. However, facing a fiscal crisis: the pace of conquest had slowed, and less revenue was collected in the form of booty taken in connection with conquest. Besides, the wealthiest regions available for the taking had already been conquered, and remaining areas in Europe and Central Asia were comparatively impoverished. Umayyad fiscal dependency upon the *jizya* increased after about 680. At one point the Umayyads tried to make conversion to Islam illegal, in order to keep jizya funds flowing. They also passed a law requiring *mawali*, although converts to Islam, continue paying the *jizya*, making them, in effect, second-class Muslims.

The *mawali*, in response, became highly disaffected. This disaffection took two important forms. The Berbers who formed the core of the Umayyad army in Iberia revolted in the 740s. Perhaps more significantly for the dynasty itself, Persian Mawali joined forces with the family of Muhammad's uncle, named Abbas, and successfully overthrew the dynasty between 745 and 750. The royal family was hunted down and killed, almost to a person. The Umayyad Prince, Abd al-Rahaman, fled to Iberia, and in 756 managed to establish an independent Emirate

(Principality)—which we learn abit more about later in this chapter. The Umayyads were finished as Caliphs, and the Abbasids became the next dynasty of caliphs.

The Abbasid Caliphate (750-1260)

The Abbasids were one of the longest dynasties in history, giving the impression of unsurpassed power. Certainly, they were very powerful for a time. But signs of weakness appeared early on with the loss of Iberia in 756, and subsequent losses in North Africa in 800. In 945, the dynasty was held captive by a shi'ite tribe called the Buyids, and thereafter the Abbasids ruled in name only while the Buyid leaders—behind the scenes—made the most important decisions. Historians use the year 945 to divide the Abbasid caliphate into two parts: early and late Abbasid rule. Consequently, 750-945 is referred to as the early Abbasid caliphate, and 945-1260 as the Late Abbasid Caliphate.

The Early Abbasid Caliphate (750–945)

The Abbasids took advantage of social and political unrest during the eighth century and successfully defeated the Umayyads. They built a new city called Baghdad (located in modern Iraq) and moved their capital there. Adopting Persian administrative techniques, they gave Islamic government and civilization a more Eastern flavor (although it would be incorrect to discount continued Western interactions and influence). Islamic civilization entered its "Golden Age" under the Abbasids. Baghdad became, for several centuries, the hub of east-west trade, a center of intellectual and theological life, and a major stop for pilgrims performing the annual Hajj to Mecca. The civilizational significance of the Abbasids and of Baghdad cannot be overstated.

Abbasid administration and Courtly life

The Abbasids adopted a Persian style of government (much the same way the Umayyads had adopted Byzantine style and methods). For example, the Abbasids borrowed a Persian technique for stating the grim and absolute nature of the Caliph's power—positioning the Royal Executioner next to the throne. More significantly, the Abbasids came to depend upon Persian administrators called Veziers, especially the Grand Vezier. One Persian family—the house of Barmak—gained supremacy during the rule of several Caliphs, and are known as the Barmakid veziers. Several Barmakids administered the empire, beginning with the first Abbasid Caliph, al-Saffah (r. 750-754) through the reign of Harun al-Rashid. Several Barmakids are featured in 1001 Nights, including the last of the line, Jafar bin Yahya (767-803). Jafar's growing power and influence eventually turned Harun against him: Jafar was beheaded and the rest of the family sent into exile. The Barmakids left a legacy of support for the art and intellectual life, acting as the main patrons for a group of intellectuals called the *ahl al-qalam* (People of the Pen). They also adapted papermaking from China, and introduced paper into the Islamic world, from where it eventually made its way into Europe several centuries later.

Courtly life in Baghdad was given a distinctly romanticized perspective in the fabled *One Thousand and One Nights* (popularly called the *Arabian Nights*), with its stories of genies, hidden treasures, mythical beasts, and flying carpets. The city grew to perhaps as many as one

million inhabitants, and its wealth and beauty became the stuff of fable and legend. For example, Charlemagne (arguably the most powerful ruler in Europe) sent a delegation to Baghdad in the 797-800. Charlemagne's ambassador reported that the city had numerous palaces and mansions, untold wealth, and took nearly three days to cross. The Caliph, Harun al-Rashid (r. 786-809) who is featured in 1001 Nights, sent gifts back to Charlemagne, including an Asian elephant named Abu Abbas. There are records of weddings featuring solid gold dinnerware, gifts of diamonds and emeralds to guests, and nuptial couples showered with thick clouds of pearls.

Beginning with the loss of Iberia in 756, the Abbasids lost territorial control across North Africa and Egypt, as well as Central Asia, Iran, and even Syria. In the 930's a Persian tribe conquered Iran in three stages, the last culminating with the conquest of Baghdad in 945. From that point on—with one exception in the early 13th century—the Abbasid caliphs were puppet rulers.

Contributions to Civilization Under Abbasid Rule and Patronage

Any discussion of the Abbasids must include major contributions to world civilization. Only a few of the numerous critical contributions can be mentioned here, and the reader should retain in mind the fact that the Abbasids were major players in numerous fields of learning and of professions.

The Abbasids founded the *bayt al-hikmah* (the House of Wisdom), a school of learning in Baghdad. The Abbasid caliphs, particularly Harun al-Rashid and his son al-Ma'mun (r. 809-833) drew intellectuals to Baghdad from many parts of the Islamic world, including scholars from the Persian Academy of Jundishapur (whose intellectual roots traced back to the Platonic Academy, established in Athens by Plato himself in about 387 BCE). The intellectuals of the *bayt al-Hikmah* produced some of the most influential ideas in all of human history. The lasting achievements associated with the House of Wisdom, and with Islamic civilization in general, include:

- *Mathematics*. Arabic numerals, the number line, and the fundamentals of arithmetic were developed by the mathematician al-Khwarizmi between 820 and 830. Algebra—an Arabic word—was pioneered by al-Khwarizmi, and the "algorithm" is named after him. Mathematics as we know it today—and the associated disciplines of engineering and the sciences—would never have developed without algebra and the mathematical innovations pioneered by Muslims beginning in the ninth century. Later Muslim mathematicians would develop trigonometry. The reader should consider a modern world without algebra and trigonometry, and attempt to envision a life without electronics, computers, cars, and so forth, all of which use the principles of Algebra in their design and construction. As if the invention of Algebra weren't sufficient to secure a place among the greatest thinkers of all time, al-Khwarizmi adapted the so-called Hindu numerals—which included the number zero—and invented the number line, decimal place values, and modern arithmetic. This is why modern numerals are called *Arabic* Numerals.
- *Philosophy*. Preservation and advancement of Greek philosophy began with al-Kindi (801–873), continued through al-Ghazali (1058–1111), and arguably culminated in Ibn Rushd (1126–1198, called Averroes in the West, whose works were studied in the University of Paris).

- *Medicine*. Advancements were made in medicine and surgery, including the basic techniques of the double-blind study and establishment of the world's first clinical hospitals. Ibn Sina (c. 980–1037) is perhaps the best-known Muslim physician, and his work *Qanun fi Tibb* (Arabic, *Canons of Medicine*) was taught in Western medical schools well into the seventeenth century.
- *Astronomy*. Mathematical advancements in trigonometry, another Muslim invention, allowed for more accurate astronomy. The astronomer Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201–1274) is credited with the earliest conceptualization of a heliocentric—sun-centered—universe, and his influence upon Copernicus (who later developed the theory of geocentrism) is increasingly acknowledged. Al-Tusi and other Islamic scholars made important contributions to science, not only because of their unique discoveries, but in the methods of science they established: they believed that the observed physical universe and a mathematical representation of that universe should be compatible, an essential element of modern scientific practice.

The Late Abbasid Caliphate (945-1260)

Historians often speak of the late Abbasid period in terms of four major challenges. Two of the challenges came from within the Islamic world, namely, the shi'ite challenge posed by the Fatmid Caliphate (909-1171), and the migration of millions of Turks from Central Asia into the Middle East in the eighth through tenth centuries. The last two challenges came from outside the Islamic world in the form of the Christian Crusades (1095-1291) and the thirteenth century Mongol invasion under Hulegu Khan (1255-1260).

The Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171)

Shi'ite discontent grew during the Early Abbasid period, meaning that those Mulsims who supported rule under the descendants of Muhammad through his son-in-law Ali resented Abbasid rule and sought to supplant it with Alid (menaing Ali's descendents). The term "Shi'ite" comes from the Arabic phrase *shi'atu 'ali*, or the "partisans of Ali." Although numerous groups arose claiming the be the legitimate supporters of Ali, for our purposes two important Shi'ite groups emerged: the Fivers (including—for a time at least— a dynasty called the Buyids) and Seveners (also called "Ismailis," which included a dynasty called the Fatimids). The identifying differences among the major divisions of Shi'ism are covered later in this chapter.

The Ismaili branch of Shi'ism, which posed perhaps the greatest threat to the Abbasid dynasty, originated somewhere in the region of the Persian Gulf. Abbasid and other persecutions forced Ismaili leaders underground, and the Ismaili sect went underground, and was largely maintained in secrecy. Missionaries, each called a *da'i*, were organized into secret cells and sent into other parts of the Islamic World to find converts among disaffected, poor or otherwise marginalized Abbasid subjects. *Dai's* were particularly successful among the workers and artisans of regions such as North Africa (parts of modern Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco). Ismaili's though disaffected, lacked a political organization an sense of purpose, which were supplied by a father and son from Syria.

In perhaps the most noteworthy story of successful escape for the Abbasids, a father and his son fled persecution in Syria, and travelled to the village of Sijilmasa (located in modern Morocco). There, the legends and prophecies planted among the village populace by Ismaili da'is prepared very fertile political ground. The prophecy told of a father and son from Syria

who would lead the disaffected of Sijilmasa to military victory over their foes and the establishment of true (i.e., Ismaili) Caliphate. The Father, named al-Mahdi, fit the description of the prophecy and was subsequently declared the true Caliph in 909 in Morocco. Al-Mahdi and his descendent caliphs, were Alids, claiming the God-given right of rule through descent from Ali and Muhammad's daughter, Fatima. Their dynasty was named after Muhammad's daughted: the Fatimid dynasty. By claiming to be true Caliphs—the successors to Muhamamad through Ali and Fatima—the Fatimids were, of course, the implacable enemies of the Abbasids, whom they considered usurpers and pretenders. The Fatimids enjoyed early military success. Beginning with the conquest of Morocco in the early 900s, the Fatimids moved eastward across North Africa and into Egypt. By the end of the tenth century seemed poised to take Baghdad itself and end Abbasid rule.

Moving rapidly into modern Tunisia the Fatimids establishing a capital at Qairawan in 909. There they built mosques and other religio-cultural centers that are famous to this day. The Fatimids, although Ismaili Shi'ites, were widely known for their tolerance of Sunni Muslims too, as well as their policies of tolerance towards Jews and Christians throughout their realm (with the notable exception in the 11th century, a Fatimid Caliph named al-Hakim). In 969, the Fatimid armies conquered Egypt, and built the city of Cairo nearthe orogoincal military encampment of Fustat, established in the seventh century by the Muslim general Amr ibn al-As. The story is told that when the victorious Fatimid Caliph, al-Mu'izz, entered the city of Cairo in 973, demand was made for him to prove his descent from Ali (and with good reason, too since the genealogy of the Fatimid caliphs was unclear, making their central claim to descend from Ali and Fatima dubious). Al-Mu'izz reportedly drew his sword and said, "here is my Pedigree," and threw gold to the observers, saying, "here is my proof." Historian J.J. Saunders concluded wryly that the Caliph's "evidence was found convincing" (Saunders, 134). The Fatimids subsequently built Cairo into a virtual Baghdad, complete with its own *dar al-'ilm* (House of Knowledge) to compete with Baghdad's *bayt al-hikma*, as well as what is said to be the oldest continuously operating university in the world, al-Azhar.

Following the conquest of Egypt and Palestine their military fortunes waned somewhat, and the Fatimids failed in their ultimately goal: the destruction of the rival Abbasids. True, a Fatimid government was established for a mere forty weeks in Baghdad in the 1050s, but Sunni Turks (discussed in more detail later in this chapter) defended the Abbasid Caliphs, and took the city back, restoring Abbasid rule—at least in neame. The Fatimids governed Jerusalem, until the warriors of the First Crusade took it in 1099 (see below). Weakened and in decline, the Fatimids were overthrown by Sultan Salah al-din (Saladin, r. 1174-1193) in 1171, as a prelude to the re-conquest of Jerusalem in 1187 (see below). Sunni Islam's future was guaranteed, although Ismaili Shi'ism continues its influence up to today, particularly through the famed Aga Khans (Prince Shah Karim al-Husseini, Aga Khan IV, b. 1939).

The Turkish Migrations (Ninth through Eleventh centuries)

The migration of millions of Turkish peoples (collectively referred to as *Turcomans*) from Central Asia to the Middle East in the ninth through eleventh centuries constitutes one of the largest human migrations in history. Having adopted Sunni Islam in the ninth century, Turks in Central Asia (then located mostly in modern Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan) subsequently learned that Shi'ite heretics (as they viewed the *Shi'ite* Fatimids) were threatening to end Abbasid rule. These same Turks believed that the Abbasid caliphs were Allah's appointed

guardians and rulers. One particular group of Turks, named after a man called named Seljuk, crossed from the region of the Aral Sea into Persia, and made their way west. In 1055 these Seljuk Turks entered the city of Baghdad, and effectively ended Buyid rule. In 1058 they returned to Baghdad and ousted the Fatimids, who, taking advantage of the Buyid demise had conquered Baghdad, and managed to hold it for forty weeks, until the Slejuks returned. The Abbasid Caliph rewarded the Seljuk commander, Tughril Bey, by investing him with the Caliph's power of *sultan* (one of the two powers of the Caliphate). In a ceremony at Baghdad in 1058, the Abbasid Caliph placed two crowns upon Tughril's head: he was now Sultan of the East and Sultan of the West. In effect, the Abbasid Caliphs had given their sultanate, which included authority to govern the empire, to Tughril and the Seljuks, and placed themselves under Turkish protection.

The Seljuks established a state in Asia Minor called the Sultanate of Rum (meaning "Rome"), from where they threatened the Byzantine Empire with regular warfare. In 1071, the Seljuks scored a decisive victory over the Byzantines at a place called Manzikert, under the leadership of Sultan Alp Arslan, crushing the main Byzantine army and capturing the Emperor, Romanus IV Diogenes. The victory opened almost all of Asia Minor to the migrating Turks. The Emperor became so desperate for help against the Seljuks that he called upon the Roman Popes for aid.[3] When the leader of the Seljuks, Malik Shah, died in 1092, the region fell into political fragmentation and civil war. This civil War, along with the Byzantine call for help, led to the First Crusade (1095-99) and the successful conquest of Edessa in modern Turkey, the Levant (modern Lebanon), and Jerusalem (see below). The Byzantines originally invited the Crusaders in order to re-establish Byzantine control over Asia Minor and Jerusalem. That did not happen. Instead, Crusader forces made important gains for themselves, establishing four "Crusader States" (see below). The Crusades failed to genuinely benefit the Byzantines, and soon Turkish regional hegemony was re-established beginning with the demise of the Crusader state of Edessa, Antioch in in 1131.

The Turkish presence in Asia Minor and the Balkans has continued to the present. In Chapter ____ we will discuss their greatest imperial achievement: The Ottoman Empire (1298-1922).

The Crusades (1905-1204)

Although Islamic and Christian states and individuals interacted throughout Late Antiquity and the formation of Christendom, such interactions did not bring the peoples of these cultures into sustained contact. This situation changed with the commencement of the Crusades. By the late eleventh century, Western Europe's population began to increase, and the region began its material rise from post-Roman obscurity. Monarchs and Popes gained increased power at the same time.

The Papacy, together with the rulers of emerging Christian kingdoms, governed a large domain (compared with their Greek Orthodox counterparts in Constantinople). The increasingly powerful Popes asserted their authority over all Christians, including those under the Greek Patriarchs in Constantinople. Doctrinal and dogmatic feuds had taken place off and on between the Popes of Rome and the Patriarchs of Constantinople during the millennium since Christianity first spread out from Palestine. These disputes came to a head in AD 1054, when a delegation from the Papacy visited the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople, insisting that he recognize Rome as the Mother Church, the head of all Christendom. The Patriarch refused and was

[3] See J. J. Saunders, *A History of Medieval Islam* (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1972).

excommunicated by the leader of the Papal delegation. The Patriarch, in turn, excommunicated the members of the Roman delegation. The event, known as the Great East-West Schism, made formal the previously informal disagreements that had been brewing for centuries. It was, perhaps, unfortunate for the Greek Patriarch that the disaster at Manzikert (below) and the desperate need for assistance against the Seljuks came so soon after the Schism of 1054.

The Byzantine state, the residue of the Roman Empire in the east, had not been faring well against Muslim forces even before the Great Schism and the arrival of the Seljuks. Having previously lost Egypt and Syria to the Islamic Empire in the seventh century, they would soon lose Asia Minor (Anatolia) to the invading Seljuk Turks following a disastrous defeat at the Battle of Manzikert (1071). The Byzantine emperor was captured in the battle, and nearly all of Asia Minor was irretrievably lost to Christianity. The Byzantines, in response, asked for military help from the West, meaning help from the Pope. Though it ignored post-Manzikert Byzantine pleas at first, the Papacy later changed its mind. In 1095, Pope Urban II delivered a famous sermon at Clermont, France, in which he called for the armies of Christendom to free the holy lands in Palestine from Muslim rule. Many of the nobles in Europe formed entire armies to march toward a distant and unfamiliar destination in Holy War against unknown "infidels." Thousands sewed the shape of the cross onto their clothing. Known as the *crucesignati* (one who bears the sign of the cross), they became soldiers of Christ. The reasons for participating in the crusades are as varied as the individual participants: some joined to receive salvation, others joined to escape prison, some joined because they had no future as third or fourth sons of nobles, and some joined out of simple excitement. For whatever reason, they joined and fought in the name of Christ. The first four crusades (1095–1204) brought Christianity and Islam into close proximity, and the lasting results were mixed.

During the First Crusade (1905-1099), Turks and other Muslim leaders were caught off guard by the unknown invaders they came to call the *franj*, or *ifranj* (probably meaning "French"), mounted in heavy armor, riding enormous draft animals, and speaking unfamiliar languages. The crusader forces soon acquired four territories (or Crusader States, as they came to be called): the County of Edessa (located in modern Turkey, *taken from Christians*, not Muslims), the Principality of Antioch (also located in modern Turkey), the County of Tripoli (modern Syria), and the kingdom of Jerusalem (modern Israel, defended by the weakened Fatimids). After the conquest of Jerusalem—the main object of the crusades—many warriors returned home.

The Second Crusade (1147-1149) case as a response to the military successes of the Turkish commander, Zengi (r. 1127-1146). Zengi organized the first significant Muslim counterattack agains thte crusader states from his base in Damascus. He took Edessa (the first of the Crusader states, and the most vulnerable to counterattack) in 1144, prompting the Second Crusade. This time prominent European monastic reformers and leaders, such as St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1163), joined the crusading effort, preaching in support of a new crusade and writing the rule of the Knights Templar, which organized crusading knights into military orders, paralleling to some extent the monastic orders. As was the case in the First Crusade, the senseless slaughter of Jews living in Europe as crusaders traveled to Palestine marred the moral claims of the venture, enraging Bernard and other Christian leaders, who sought religious purity in crusading. Whereas the Muslim forces were caught off-guard by the armies of the First Crusade, this time they were prepared. Zengi's son and successor, Nuraddin (r. 1146–1174)

successfully defeated the combined forces of the Second Crusade through a combination of sound military strategies and religious zeal in the form of a revised and more robust doctrine of Jihad. Just as the Europeans had learned the value of preaching Holy War to inspire their troops, so too did the Turks and other Muslims, who reinvigorated what was before a more formal (and arguably more generalized) concept of *jihad*, turning it into the more virulent form identifiable today, particularly in developing the concept that the military jihad was an obligation imposed on individual Muslims, not merely upon their governments in general.

The retaking of Jerusalem itself in 1187 prompted the Third Crusade (1189–1192). Some crusaders did not return to homes in Europe, but remained in the Middle East after the first two crusades. They made a life for themselves among the Muslim population of the region. These Christians often spoke Arabic and adopted regional dress and manners—they had "gone native," as some would say. They got along with the Muslims and often resented "newcomer" crusaders who continued to provoke interfaith violence. In the meantime, a new Muslim commander emerged in Egypt, Salah ad-Din (r. 1174–1193, called Saladin in English), a Kurdish Muslim who united Syria and Egypt. Saladin marched against the crusader forces at Hattin—located near Galilee in northern Palestine—and there delivered the Crusaders a decisive defeat on July 4, 1187. The way was open to Jerusalem, and Saladin took the city following a brief siege. A Third Crusade was called in response, and both Richard I (soubriquet, "Lionheart," r. 1189–1199) of England and Phillip II Augustus of France (r. 1180–1223) participated. Although Richard scored some minor victories, Jerusalem proved impossible to retake, and the Third Crusade ended in failure.

In 1202, Pope Innocent III called a Fourth Crusade (1202-1204). This time the crusaders would attack Jerusalem from the south, via Egypt. Lacking funds and eventually losing the support of the Pope, the crusaders instead traveled to Constantinople. In 1204, they sacked the city and established the Latin Empire of Constantinople, which lasted until 1261. Ironically, the entire crusading project commenced in response to pleas for assistance to save Constantinople from Muslims, but now its inhabitants sought to save it from *Christians*. By 1289, the four original Crusader States had fallen. Although subsequent crusades were called, the remarkable success of the entire Crusader project never lasted beyond 1187, the year the Crusaders lost Jerusalem to Saladin.

Legacy of the Crusades

The Crusades, organized by the popes and led by the emerging national nobilities of Christendom, may ultimately have proven a failure in a military and political sense, but they provided a strong unifying influence in the modern regions of France, England, and Germany. The western half of the continent began to think and see itself as a unity: Europe. The establishment of Christendom, far from being a "Dark Age" or merely a "Middle Age," was a formative age, laying the cultural, religious, and political foundation for the emergence of Europe.

Although perhaps a military failure (as mentioned above), the Crusades proved "successful" in other ways. The interaction of Europeans and Muslims promoted intellectual exchange and trade. Wealth began to flow into Europe, first through Venice and other Italian city-states with harbors on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean, and then moved westward and northward into France and, eventually, England. In contrast, however, the most significant

drawback to the Crusades was the establishment of a long-standing cultural divide between Christianity and Islam and the articulation of that divide in terms of civilization-wide Holy War.

The Mongol Invasion (1255 to 1260)

The Mongols—a confederation of Central Asian tribes united under the command of Genghis Khan (r. 1206-1227)—had long set their eye on capturing the Middle East. Under his vigorous leadership, the Mongol army seemed unstoppable (see map 7). China soon fell under Mongol control, as did lands north of the Black Sea. In 1250, Hulegu Khan crossed the Oxus River and into Islamic territories, his sight fixed on Baghdad and the Middle East. His aim was first to eliminate the famous radical and troublesome Ismaili *shi'ite* group, known as the Assassins, in their Perisan fortress called Alamut. This was accomplished in 1256, and the Assassins—who had previously survived every Abbasid attempt to destroy them—finally succumbed to the Mongols under Hulegu. The Mongol march thereafter continued toward Baghdad. In 1258, the last Abbasid Caliph, al-Musta'sim (r. 1242-1258), resisted the Mongols in the vain hope that other Muslim princes would come to the aid of their Caliph and the city of Baghdad. Hulegu besieged and took the famed city. Then the destruction began. Dykes were broken, irrigation and other water works destroyed, flooding the city and its defenders, after Musta'sim surrendered unconditionally, the city of Baghdad, nearly a thousand years old, was thoroughly sacked. The region still has not fully recovered.

> The palaces, colleges and mosques were plundered and burnt; the cultural accumulation of five centuries perished in the flames, and the appalling figure of 800,000 is the lowest estimate given of the number of men, women, and children who were slaughtered in the streets and houses…in view of the Mongol superstition about shedding with the sword the blood of sovereign princes, [the Caliph and his household] were rolled into carpets and trampled to death by horses. So ended miserably the Abbasid Caliphate and the glories of medieval Baghdad.[4]

Following the Sack of Baghdad in 1258, the Mongols seemed invincible. Their contemplated westward march appeared unstoppable. However, a powerful army of Turks set out from Egypt and met the Mongols at '*ayn jalut* (Goliath's Spring) in modern Syria. Led by Mamluk Sultan Kutuz, and under the command of the renowned General Baybars, Muslim forces were victorious against the Mongols at the Battle of 'Ayn Jalut in 1260. This victory crushed the myth of Mongol invincibility: "The spell the great Genghis had cast upon the world was broken forever."[5] Thus ended the classical phase of Islamic civilization.

The Shadow Caliphs and the end of the Abbasids

Abbasid rule in Baghdad ended with the sack of the city. A member of the dynasty was made Caliph three years later in Cairo, under the patronage of the Mamluk Sultan. Called the "Shadow Caliphs" by historians, they were confined largely to ceremonial functions, although

[4] Saunders, 181-182.
[5] Ibid.

they continued to hold the best claim of anyone in the Islamic world to a caliphate. Then, in 1517, the Ottoman Turks conquered Egypt (see Chapter ____, and the Shadow Caliph in Cairo surrendered his title to Sultan Selim I, ending all Abbasid hope of again ruing the Islamic World.

Conclusion

This chapter began with a quotation made by a western scholar (Alphonse de Lamartine) that drew attention to the achievements of Muhammad and the enduring legacy of Islamic faith and tradition he began millennia ago. We have briefly touched upon the numerous profound and enduring contributions of Islam and the Middle East to world civilization, yet these positive elements of the region and Islamic civilization are often overlooked in favor of a growing pervasive, uninform, and contentions vision of the region and of Islam.

With that in mind, let's consider the words of journalist Meg Greenfield, who in an article about the Middle East entitled "Islam and Us," stated:

> No part of the world is more important to our [i.e., the USA's] well-being at the moment—and no part of the world [or the religions of the world] is more hopelessly and systematically and stubbornly misunderstood by us" (*The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference*, p. 165).

If progress is to be made, then these fundamental misunderstandings should be replaced by a hopeful, systematic, and stubborn *understanding* of the Middle East and of Islam. This chapter was designed to provide the reader with critical information and insights that, it is wished, will assist them in formulating a new vision, leading to new and healthier national policies, as well as new and more peaceful interactions between nations and individuals.

Beginning in the early seventh century with the revelations attributed to Muhammad, the religion of Islam began its centuries-long development into the second largest faith in the world today. From its humble origins in harsh and remote deserts, Arabs rapidly conquered much of the ancient Roman and Persian empires, and more. Although conversion to the new religion outside of Arabia was gradual and took more several centuries to peacefully complete (with the exception of Persian and Berber converts), there are about 1.4 billion Muslims today, in nearly 200 nations. Non-Muslims who lived under Muslim rule—in Iberia during the *convivencia*, for example–often thrived. There is no inherent enmity between Muslims and non-Muslims, contrary to what a militant minority in the West and within Islam would have the reader believe. Understanding the history of Islam from 570 to 1260 is essential to understanding the Islamic World today, and in making an informed assessment of both the minority militant fundamentalist agenda and the more moderate forms of Islam held by the great majority of its believers.

CHAPTER 16

The Emergence of Islam

> It has become essential for us to understand Islam as a religion, its unity, diversity and culture—and to appreciate the legacy of Islamic civilizations, their role in the development of modern civilizations, the roles of Muslim nations and the challenges they face, and their future place and role in the world. Of course, this is much easier said than done, especially because in America today there is unfortunately no deep national commitment to history and heritage—not our own, and certainly not that of the world at large.
>
> — Vartan Gregorian, *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith*, 3.

Introduction

Modern persons unfamiliar with Islam tend to view the religion and its adherents in monolithic terms. That is, of course, not the case. Like any group united by faith or ideology there are strong religious and political point of common perspective, but like any such group, there are likely as many differences as there are members, as well. Blame for misperception of Islam as a monolith, rather than as a mosaic composed of great diversity, may be laid at the feet of inherited perspectives from, say, the unfortunate military engagements of the Crusades, or from the hatemongering of celebrity "news" entertainers, from rumor, from fear of an unfamiliar culture, from certain politicians and others who feel they may gain from fear-based motivations, or from plain old ignorance. Whatever the reason may be, and irrespective of where the blame may be places, there is no reason why ignorance, misinformation, or disinformation cannot be overcome by individuals determined to learn about Islam.

Not all blame for misunderstanding Islam or Muslims lies with non-Muslims, however. As is the case with religions or ideologies generally, there is a tendency to invent a self-defining past that may not have existed—at least not as the "golden age" such self-defining pasts often represent. For example, certain fundamentalist elements within Islam seek to "re-establish" a so-called seventh century Caliphate that did not exist in the puritanical forms they preach. Like most religions or ideologies Islam evolved, it emerged over rather large spans of time, similarly to the drawn-out emergence of Christianity described in chapter 4, the Christian Reformation described in Chapter 6, or the varieties and sects of Buddhism, Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism described in Chapters 10 through 12. In similar fashion, Islam emerged over a period of centuries. The basic forms and institutions of Islam emerged between 610 and 1260 CE a period of history known as Classical Islamic Civilization, the subject of chapter 13. This rather extended period of time, and the complex history of the emergence of Islam will be broken down into the following subjects, trends, and themes:

- The development of the Caliphate
- The creation of the Sharia
- The ritualization of orthopraxy and orthodoxy

- Shi'ism
- Sufism

Each of these subjects, trends and themes will be discussed in that order. Please keep in mind that the discussion is not strictly chronological.

Development of the Caliphate

The crisis of leadership caused by the death of Muhammad in 632 CE (see chapter 13) made the need for strong leadership immediate and necessary. Traditionally, there were two dominate concepts about how to best select the new leader: one based upon experience, age, and less tangible qualities of leadership, and the other based upon blood relationship to Muhammad. Although later generations of Muslims have often cast the selection process as a competition between these two perspectives with lines drawn between the adherents of these two positions, the situation was not so clearly defined or delineated. Some among later generations of Shi'ites would claim that a deceit was practiced resulting in the selection of Abu Bakr over Muhammad's son-in-law Ali. Instead, the selection of the first four leaders (see the *rashidun* Caliphate (632-661 CE in chapter 13 for more information) seemed more like a compromise than a conflict of well-defined positions and partisans. Although each of the first four leaders came from the dominant Quraysh tribe of Mecca, none were from Muhammad's own clan within that tribe. All had been close companions of Muhammad and were among the earliest converts to his prophetic message. Even in light of any attempted compromise, these early leaders were not without their detractors or disgruntled subjects: only the first, Abu Bakr, died a natural death, while the remaining three were assassinated. Nevertheless, the territory under their control expanded dramatically, bringing virtually all of Arabia, Egypt, Geographic Syria, Mesopotamia, and western Persia under their control within a few decades, and it was the pace of expansion, perhaps more than anything else, that necessitated further refinement in leadership, and the power exercised by the leaders.

The title Caliph (Arabic, *khalifa*) has been applied to the *rashidun* leaders. A Caliph, simply put, was a "successor," or one who followed in leadership to those who came before. The phrase *amir al-mu'miniin* (Commander of the Believers) was used to described the authority of the Caliph the growing Arab empire. The Caliph was also the *imam*, meaning he took the lead in organizing public worship. In all, as both *amir a-mu'miniin* and as *imam*, the Caliph was responsible for public order, commanding the armies, and leading pubic prayer. Although the Caliph was to be a devout and pious Muslim, they had no particular religious authority apart from the duty of organizing worship and appointing religious judges. That would change under the Umayyad dynasty (661-750).

The Umayyad rulers at once both distanced themselves from religious authority and at the same time sought to regulate the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, and to prohibit or to regulate conversion to the Emerging religion of Islam. Under the Umayyads a new Caliphal title was added: *khalifat rasul allah*, meaning "Successor to the Prophet of Allah." Although the title *khalifa* (Successor) had been previously used, it is the new association of *khalifa* with the Messenger of Allah (i.e., with Muhammad) that gave a distinct religious flavor to the Caliph's authority. Although not a prophet—since the Qur'an declared that Muhammad was the *khatam al-anbiya'* (Seal of the Prophets, meaning the last prophet sent by Allah), the Umayyad Caliphs were declaring that they were something closer to a prophet, or that they

represented Muhammad, although absent, in some undefined way. As a rule, however, the Umayyads took little interest in the development of dogma, orthodoxy, or orthopraxy during their reign, leaving such matters in the hands of emerging religious thinkers and scholars, located mostly in Medina, far form the Umayyad capital in Damascus. The Umayyads became involved in religious matters mostly from their interest in fiscal policy and imperial revenue. Non-Muslims, called *dhimmi*, paid a special tax called the *jizya*, in return for which they were exempted from military service and other public obligations. As imperial conquests either slowed under the Umayyads, or were increasingly relegated to less prosperous parts of North Africa or Asia, revenues from booty and the spoils of conquest diminished and reliance upon taxes increased, particularly reliance upon the *jizya*. The situation proved so desperate that, for a time, the Umayyad Caliphs prohibited conversion to Islam entirely, or allowed conversion but required the new converts to continue paying the *jizya* even though they were now formally Muslims. The resulting widespread discontent among converts in Persia and North Africa (called *mawali*, or "adoptees") played a major part in the overthrow of the Umayyads during the Abu Muslim revolt (745-750 CE, see Chapter 13), and the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty of Caliphs (750-1258 CE).

The Abbasid rulers, unlike their Umayyad predecessors, took a more active role in the definition of Islamic dogma. First of all, the Abbasid Caliphs countered the Umayyad image of impiety by taking overtly religious regnal (i.e., "royal") names such as "al-Mahdi" (He whom God Guides) and Harun al-Rashid (Aaron the Righteous). Second, the Abbasid Caliphs emphasized their role as Protectors of Islam and as holy warriors responsible for waging *jihad* (which then consisted mostly of annual forays into Byzantine territories to engage in a limited, almost formalized, war against the unbelievers). But the Abbasid Caliphs went too far when they intervened in ongoing religious debate, particularly what is known as the Mu'tazilite Controversy. A growing group of philosophers and theologians known as the Mu'tazilites represented a strong rationalist trend among certain religious thinkers of the eighth and ninth centuries. They were confirmed skeptics, adopting a position on matters of faith and theology they termed *manzila baina manzilatain*, or "between belief and unbelief." This was reflected in their view of the nature and origin of the Qur'an itself: the position ascribed to the Mu'tazilites was that the Qur'an was created by Allah, and therefore was not co-equal with Allah, and was subject to rational, philosophical interpretation and application. This is the "created Qur'an" theological position. This was in opposition to the position known as the "Uncreated Qur'an," meaning that the book was co-eternal with Allah, and was not subject to human reason or philosophical interpretation. Although this debate may seem trivial today or to non-Muslims, it was critical in determining the emerging authoritarian legalist position of those scholars developing the Sharia, and thus the debate was crucial to the formation of modern Sunni Islam. The Mu'tazilites supported the Abbasid Caliphs, and in fact the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tasim (r. 833-842) went so far as to side with the "created Qur'an" or Mu'tazilite position, and established inquisitional courts to enforce Mu'tazilite dogma, acting metaphorically much like a Pope speaking *ex cathedra*. The whole affair backfired to the point where Caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-861) was forced to withdraw support for the Mu'tazilites, and withdraw from the fields of theology and dogma. Never again would the Abbasid Caliphs assert themselves as religious leaders and arbiters of theological dispute.

By the end of the ninth century, the office of the Caliph, called the Caliphate (note: "Caliph" is to "President" as "Caliphate" is to "Presidency"), was effectively defined. The Caliphate consisted of two powers or authorities. The first was the power called *sultan*, meaning

"power" or "authority," and was associated with what may be considered practical matters (the military, communications, marketplace regulation, police, contracts and commerce). Sultan became associated over time with the earlier title *amir al-mu'miniin*, Commander of the Believers. The second power was called *imam*, or leadership, and became associated with the title *khalifat rasul allah*, or Successor to the Messenger of God. Imam involved providing for mosques and places of worship, regulating relations between various religions in the empire, and the appointment of religious judges but not, as we have seen, intervention in matters of religious law, dogma, or faith. The name of the caliph was read during Friday noon prayers throughout the Abbasid realm, but aside from these restrictions the religious authority of the Caliphate was strictly limited. There was no theocracy as such. (Note that although the term 'imam" denotes leadership generally, but among Shi'ites, as we shall see below, the title has strong religious leadership overtones, and indeed, a Shi'ite Imam does pronounce upon law, doctrine, dogma, and theology).

In conclusion, the chief governing office of the Islamic Empire—the Caliphate—emerged over a period of centuries, and was defined by changing material and political conditions in the Empire. It was not the product of a "golden age" nor was it clearly understood or defined in the first century of Islam.

The creation of the Sharia

Like other aspects of what became the religion of Islam, the Sharia—the system of Islamic law that defines Sunnism as much or more than any other aspect of Islam—developed over a period of centuries. Historian Wael B. Hallaq describes this formative period as extending into the tenth century, a period of over three hundred years. The development of Islamic law, and the Sharia in particular, coincided with the territorial expansion of the Arab Empire and conversion to Islam. As non-Arab peoples converted to the faith taught by Muhammad in the seventh through tenth centuries, a variety of practices and customs persisted from Arabian origins, or new customs were adopted by converted peoples. The question of what, exactly, makes a Muslim a Muslim became more and more pressing over time, as a widening variety of practices entered into the religion. Additionally, the question of what made a non-Muslim a non-Muslim became equally pressing. Although groups of thinkers, such as the Mu'tazilites (above) attempted to address these questions by rationalist and philosophical means, others sought to find the answers in more historical means by researching tradition, authority, or custom. This does not mean that there were two distinct approaches, one rational and the other historical, but that there were several combinations of these approaches, some resulting in the Sharia and Sunni Islam. We begin by discussing the formation of Islamic identity.

It would seem obvious that the early converts to the message of Muhammad would obviously identify themselves as Muslims, followers of a distinct religion called "Islam," as revealed by Muhammad. Indeed, that is how the "traditional narrative" of the founding of Islam goes: Muhammad preached, the converts formed a distinct religious community separate from polytheists, Jews, and Christians, and called themselves Muslims from the time Muhammad first began public preaching in 613 CE. More recent historians, such as John Wansborough, Patricia Crone, James A. Bellamy, and Fred M. Donner, have drawn the traditional narrative of near-instantaneous Islamic identity into question, proposing instead that it took decades, if not centuries, for Muslims to define themselves, particularly as compared with Jews and Christians

(i.e., other monotheists). Each of these historians has been troubled by problems found in the historical sources relating to Muhammad and the early decades of Islam. For example, there are no contemporary biographies of Muhammad and those that exist were written over a century after his death. Many of the traditional sources are in the nature of miracle stories, explaining the spiritual stature of Muhammad but offering little historical fact. These source-based challenges invited a number of scholars to reassess the traditional narrative, and in some cases to propose alternative accounts of Muhammad the early decades of Islam. Fred Donner, in particular has proposed a narrative that is becoming more widely accepted by historians.

Donner essentially argues that Muhammad did not so much fund a new religion as attempt to reform monotheism itself through what he calls the "Believers Movement." Anyone who accepted God (Allah) as the only God, could belong to the movement. This is reflected in the quranic text as reveled to Muhammad by Gabriel: *la illaha illa allah*, or "there is no god but Allah." Note that the name "Allah" is a generic name for the one true God, and was not unique to Islam. In fact, it bears a strong association with the Hebrew Eloh. In Arabic translations of the Bible, God the Father is called Allah. Muhammad seemed to be calling for a return to the God of the Partriarch Abraham, known simply as El. Additionally, the Qur'an itself uses the terms Islam and Muslim in very broad ways: Abraham was, according to the Qur'an, a Muslim although he lived thousands of years before Muhammad. "Muslim" and "Islam" refer to surrendering one's will to Allah, and in that sense Abraham was a Muslim, Moses was a Muslim, Adam was a Muslim, Solomon was a Muslim: they surrendered their will to Allah in their day, but they certainly did not follow the practices of Islam. Donner points out that although the Qur'an uses the term Muslim, it uses another term far more often" *al- Mu'minuun*, or "the Believers," meaning those that believe in and follow the revelations given to Muhammad. The Blievers could include all monotheists, and only polytheists (sometimes called "pagans") were excluded due to their acceptance of multiple gods. The faith of the Believers, called *din* in the Qur'an, wa straightforward: Surrender your will to the one true God, live a moral life, and prepare your soul for final judgment. *Din*, as presented in the Qur'an includes the practice of fasting, prayer, and charity but these are not defined in ways familiar to modern Sunni Muslims (praying five times a day facing Mecca, fasting the month of Ramadan, or paying a zakat offering). In other words, ritual and religious practice are required in din, but not in the manner proscribed by the Sharia. Din was, as Donner suggests, the original religious message of Muhammad, not the legal requirements of the Sharia. Only later was the phrase *wa muhammadun rasul allah* (and *Muhammad* is the Messenger of Allah) added to *la illaha illa allah*, and this only after the followers of Muhammad identified themselves as different from other monotheists, Jews and Christians, toward the end of the seventh century. In short, Muhammad was a monotheistic reformer, not the founder of a new religion, who sought to return his people to the simple truths of monotheism as practice by Abraham: there is only one true god, we must live moral lives, and prepare for the final judgment where Allah will hold each individual accountable for their practice of *din*. If that is the case, where did "Islam" and the Sharia come from?

From the eighth through the tenth centuries a number of Islamic religious leaders began to refine Islamic Identity. We know that not all monotheists of the ancient Middle East accepted Muhammad as a prophet in the same tradition that had produced Abraham, Moses, or Jesus. All these groups claimed to be monotheists, but what made a Muslim a Muslim was acceptance of Muhammad as a prophet—and not only any prophet, but the final prophet. Thus the Quranic formula *la illaha illa allah* had *wa muhammadun rasul allah* added to it. Although monotheists could accept, in theory at least, that there is no god but God (Allah), only "Muslims" accepted

that Muhammad was a prophet, and that he was the founder of "Islam." The origins of Islamic identity may have developed that way. But the variety of Islamic practices and customs urged early traditionalist scholars toward a fundamentalist project, a return to the fundamental practices and beliefs of Muhammad, a journey to the roots of the Believer's Movement, and this resulted in the creation of the Sharia in the eighth through tenth centuries.

A series of attempts to formally define what it meant to be Muslim resulted in the establishment of four "schools" of Islamic law, each with its version of the Sharia. These four schools are named after their founders: (1) the Hanifi school, named after Abu Hanifa (d. 767), (2) the Maliki, named after Malik ibn Anas (d. 795), (3) the Shafi'i, named after al-Shafi'i (d. 820), and, (4) the Hanbali, named after Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855, and was persecuted by the Abbasid Caliphs since he opposed the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the created Qur'an). These are the four "orthodox" schools (Arabic, *maddhab*) of Sharia law. All four schools make use of the same basic sources of authority: (1) the Qur'an, (2) the *hadith*, or sayings attributed to Muhammad, and (3) the examples taken from Muhammad's life (called his *sunna*, from which the term Sunni is taken). Although the same authority is used, the methods and emphases of each school differ. This may seem unimportant to the modern reader, but there is great contemporary significance to the differences. Importantly, almost all of what are today considered the most fundamentalist—or indeed, the most militant—aspects of modern Islam are associated with or derived from the Hanbali school, including Saudi Wahhabism, Salafism, al-Qaeda, ISIS/ISIL, Boko Haram, and others. Anyone seeking to understand the more militant movement in modern Islam should spend time understanding the methods and teachings of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and his disciple Ibn Taymiyya. Ahmad ibn Hanbal endured persecutions under the Abbasids, took a militant and unwavering stand on Islamic law and theology, and prevailed: it should come as little surprise that his movement, born in conflict, is considered a modern source of Islamic conflict.

From these schools of law and similar movements a class of learned men, called '*ulama* ("wise men," or "knowing men") emerged, and came to dominate the teachings of Sunni Islam, became its judges, established its courts and rendered its fatwas and legal opinions. A final step in the formation of Sharia law came in the eleventh when the training of the '*ulama* became more formal with the invention of the madrasa, the theological seminary, a major educational tradition in the training of '*ulama* throughout Islam. Islamic schools are quite ancient, dating back to the eighth or ninth centuries. But the madrasa and its curriculum were formalizaed and spread by a Seljuk (see chapter 13) Prime Minister named Nizam al-Mulk, and his form of madrasa is named after him, called *nizamiyya*. Utilized by rulers throughout the Islamic world, the *nizamiyya* were known for the quality of the curriculum, the rigor and discipline of training, and the piety of the graduates. Perhaps the most famous nizamiyya madrasa was that of Baghdad (founded in 1065), which counted the famous philosopher al-Ghazali among its faculty. The nizamiyya madrasa system help establish Sunni Sharia law more firmly throughout the Islamic World, but in particular helped to counter the growing influence of Shi'ism under the Fatimids and Buyids (see Chapter 13).

Orthopraxy and Orthodoxy: The Five Pillars and Six Articles of Faith

Scholars often discuss religions in terms of their orthopraxy and their orthodoxy. Orthopraxy means "correct practice or observance" and orthodoxy means "correct belief." The difference between one sect and another in almost every religion usually involves serious disagreements concerning orthopraxy and orthodoxy. In the case of Islam, the Five Pillars focus

upon both orthodoxy (e.g., "There is no god but Allah"), and orthopraxy (e.g., daytime fasting in the month of Ramadan). Like the religion itself, the formalization of the Sharia over a period of centuries, helped establish Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

The Five Pillars of Islam

Here are the standard "five Pillars" accepted by the great majority of Muslims today, particularly Sunnis:

1. *Shahada*, or witness: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger," repeated in the five daily prayers. The *shahada* also serves as a statement of commitment or of formal conversion to Islam: any adult who sincerely recites it publically is a Muslim.
2. *Salat*, or prayer: Muslims must pray five times daily: dawn (well before sunrise), noon, midday, evening, and night (well after sunset). The testimony is repeated in each prayer, affirming the devotee's adherence to Islam and rejection of idolatry;
3. *Sawm*, or fasting. Muslims fast during the lunar month of Ramadan. Fasting begins each day for nearly thirty consecutive days at dawn (long before sunrise, when light is barely discernable in the sky), and continues until night (when there is no discernable sunlight left). The schools of Sharia law may use different methods for calculating when dawn or dusk arrives, but all practice the fast during Ramadan.
4. *Zakat*, or Almsgiving/Charity. Muslims should pay the annual "tithe," and are encouraged to be generous to those in need year-round. Sunni Muslims calculate the *zakat* differently than do Shi'ites, but both groups pay an annual *zakat* nevertheless.
5. *Hajj*, following Muhammad's example (who was, according to tradition, himself following Ibrahim's example) Muslims—of all sects, scattered across the globe—travel to the regions of Mecca and perform pilgrimage rites associated with the *ka'aba*, with Ibrahim, and with Muhammad. For those too poor to attend, another person can perform the hajj vicariously, in their place or even in the place of an entire poor village.

The Six Articles of Islamic Faith

The six Articles of Faith, like the *shahada*, are statements of orthodoxy. Tradition holds that Gabriel revealed the six Articles of Faith to Muhammad—they are not set forth in the Qur'an as formal articles of faith. The six Articles are:

1. Faith in Allah;
2. Faith in Allah's Angels;
3. Faith in Divine Books (which is not necessarily restricted only to the Qur'an);
4. Faith in the Prophets (which include Jesus, John the Baptist, and many other Biblical prophets, as well as in Muhammad);
5. Faith in the Day of Religion (Day of Judgment);
6. Faith in Predestination (or divine fate).

The Five Pillars and Six Articles Today

Any individual in the past who sincerely believed and practiced the Five Pillars and the Six Articles of Faith was generally considered Muslim, no matter which sect or school of law they belonged to. That is changing in present times. Now, a minority composed of the strictest of Sunni fundamentalists, denounce members of other Islamic sects, and in some cases destroy their

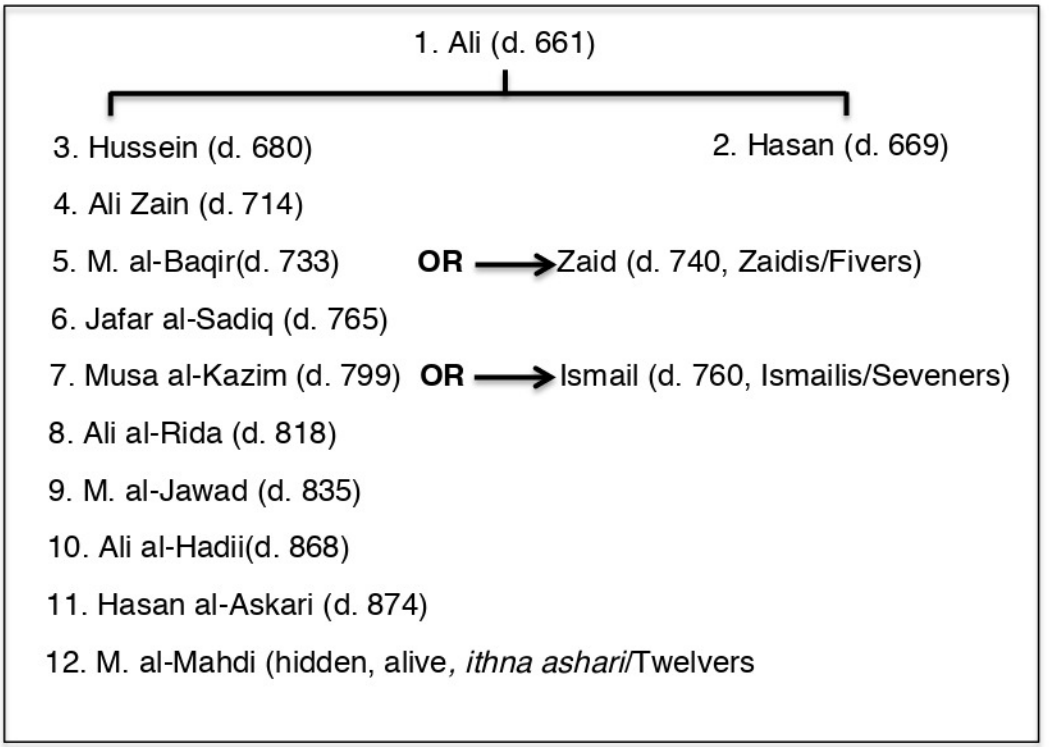
mosques and shrines, or—in the most extreme of cases—hunt down and kill them. ISIS (or ISIL), for example, has, at the time of this writing, engaged in killing significant numbers of Shi'ites and Sufis in Syria and northern Iraq. Understanding that—historically at least—being Muslim has been broadly, rather than narrowly, defined may help the reader and other modern observers to distinguish among the great majority of moderate, adaptive, and accepting Muslims versus the more radical, and sometimes violent, minority fundamentalists.

Shi'ism

Shi'ism, like Islam in general, formed over the course of several centuries. It began with the broad position that the Caliph should be a descendent of Muhammad. Following an initial period of formation, three main branches of Shi'ism emerged, as did formal doctrines of divine leadership and authority. By the time of the Imam Jafar al-Saddiq (d.765 CE) the beginnings of a Shi'ite school of Islamic law had taken root, and the establishment of Shi'ism as a formal sect of Islam was nearly complete. It may be said that nearly all Shi'ites hold:

- That Ali was divinely commissioned to be the successor, or Caliph, of Muhammad, and that no other was fit to rule so long as Ali lived;
- That Ali, and Ali alone, possessed divine authority to correctly interpret and apply the revelations given to Muhammad, a power called *imam*;
- That Ali passed *imam* to his son, Hasan, and from Hasan it was passed to the younger son, Hussein;
- That the authority of *Imam* was passed from father to son , and in some sects of Shi'ism, imam has been passed down through history up to this day (see the discussion of the Aga Khan, above); and,
- That certain descendants of Ali who were (or in some cases, are) gifted with the imamate are called Imams (e.g., Imam Ali, Imam Jafar, and so forth).

Although virtually all Shi'ites agree with the points made above, three widely-recognized major divisions within Shi'ism resulted from differing claims as to *which* sons were in fact given the power of Imam by *which* fathers. For example, one sect, called "Fivers," holds that the Fifth Imam was named Zaid, and that Zayd's brother, Muhammad al-Baqir was not the true Imam. We discussed the Fivers in connection with the Buyids (above). This sect is also called the Zaidi sect. A second sect, called Seveners, held that a son named Ismail was the true seventh mam, since he survived his father's death, and his older brother did not. They are also called Ismaili's, and were discussed in connection with the Fatimids (above). Members of the third group are known as Twelvers. They believe that the Twelfth Imam, Muhammad al-Muntazar, was taken directly to God's presence, and will return at the end of time as the awaited Mahdi. About twelve to fifteen percent of the world's Muslims are Shi'ites, located mostly in Yemen, the Persian Gulf, southern Iraq, and in Iran. There are about eighteen million Zaidi Shi'ites, living mostly in Yemen. The twenty million or so Ismaili Muslims are spread across more than a dozen nations. Twelver Shi'a number about 150 million, and are located primarily in Iran and southern Iraq. The following chart should help identify the points of departure between Fivers, Seveners, and Twelvers, in terms of their chain of Imams.



Sufism: The Mystical Element of Islam

Many of the world's religions have both exoteric and esoteric expressions and associated spiritual practices. The term exoteric refers to those aspects of religions, particularly knowledge, doctrine, and dogma, that are openly available and understood. For example, any regularly held public religious service, such as an orthodox Christian mass represents an exoteric aspect of that religion. The mass involves certain declarations of knowledge and faith as well as rituals such as the Eucharist (also known as the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or simple the Sacrament in Christian sects). Other aspects of religion may be esoteric and involve knowledge and ritual that are hidden, secret, or sacred. The Mystery Cults covered in Chapter 2 serve as examples: persons were initiated into the mystery cults, took oaths considered sacred, and the knowledge imparted in their ritual was purposely kept secret. The Mystery Cults centered upon esoteric religion and spirituality. Esoteric religions and cults limit access to knowledge and spiritual practices to those individuals who have been formally initiated. Thus, the cult of Isis or the Cult of Orpheus, or the Cult of Mithras, all covered in Chapter 2, were esoteric and imparted knowledge necessary for spiritual development, salvation, or resurrection only to initiates. The ancient Greek-speaking world used the word *mysterion* to describe esoteric knowledge and ritual. Mysterion means to keep the eyes and lips shut, or in other words, to keep something secret. It is from *mysterion* that we get the modern English word "mystery," and a person initiated into a myster cult is called a Mystic. Islam, like Christianity, Judaism, and many other modern religions, has an esoteric element—not a sect as such—and in Islam the exoteric or mystical system is called Sufism.

There are millions of Sufis in the world, and the great majority are also Muslims, that is, they follow Islamic law and orthopraxy as well as participating in the mystical tradition of Islam. There are also thousads of persons today that are Sufis, but not Muslims as such (a position that many modern Muslims would take issue with). In other words, Sufi initiates participate in the esoteric knowledge and ritual of Sufism, but not its orthopractic or legalistic elements (ritual prayer, fasting during Ramadan, and so forth). Some Sufis believe that their knowledge and practices have been in existence at least since the time of Muhammad and his son-in-law Ali. Some Sufis believe that their knowledge and ritual were originally given directly by God to the ancient Patriarch Adam in the fabled Garden of Eden. Other Sufis believe that Sufism has incorporated into itself many pre-existing mystery traditions from Zoroastrianism, from Christianity, from Judaism, from Hinduism, from Buddhism, and other formal exoteric religious systems. Understandably, Sufism is generally open to many, if not all, exoteric traditions, and has strong interfaith roots. The famous Sufi Saint, Hazrat Inayat Khan—credited with bringing Sufism to the "West" in the early 1900s, reportedly said that Sufism, in its broadest sense, is the heritage of all humanity, that it has existed as long as humanity has existed, and that noe individual or institution has the right to define, control, or limit access to its teachings and practices.

From an historical perspective Sufis first appeared in the seventh century CE, shortly after the death of Muhammad. Hasan al-Basri (born in Medina in 642 CE, d. 728) is often referenced as the first Sufi. Other early notable Sufis include the Persian mystic Mansur al-Hallaj (858-922 CE), who was tortured and put to death following his statement *ana al-haqq*, or, "I am the Ultimate Reality." Rabia al-Basri (714-801) provides an example of an early and highly influential female Sufi, who famously stated:

> O God! If I worship You for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell
> and if I worship You in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise.
> But if I worship You for Your Own sake,
> grudge me not Your everlasting Beauty.

Persecutions and other pressures influenced Sufis to disclose their teachings in symbolism, poetry, or allegory, so that only initiates would usnderstand the true, esoteric, meaning of their teaching and practice.

Sufis have exercised a deep influence on philosopy and theology within Islam, and across religious boundaries (including Christianity). For example, Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali (known simply as al-Ghazali, 1058-1111 CE) wrote numerous influential works, most noablte *The Incorherence of the Philosophers*, a work that challenged the methods of ancient Greek thnkers such as Socrates and Plato. Responding to al-Ghazali, another Islamic philosopher Averroes (Arabic Ibn al-Rushd, 1126-1198, andwho was not himself a Sufi) wrote a response entitled *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, a work that, along with Averroes' Commentaries on the work of Aristotle, was read and taught at the University of Paris. Another Sufi, Muhyaddin Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) is known as *shaykh al-akbar* (The Greatest Master) wrote one of the most widely-read books on Sufi speculative philosophy, *fusus al-hikam* (*The Jewel-settings of Wisdom*) a book that teaches how prophets (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jesus, Moses, Muhammad, and many others) were living jewel-settings, or bezels, into which God placed a gemstone of a particular viture. Ibn Arabi was also famous for his ability to respect other faiths:

O Marvel! a garden amidst the flames.
My heart has become capable of every form:
it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,
and a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Kaa'ba,
and the tables of the Torah and the book of the Quran.
I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take,
that is my religion and my faith (Chittick, 304).

Sufis have played and continue to play an important and vital role in theology and philosophical speculation about Love and God.

By the 12th century, Sufism became more formalized, organized into orders, each called a *tariqa* in Arabic. These orders transmitted esoteric knowledge and practice from master to disciple in a chain of spiritual transmission, called a *silsila* in Arabic. Each tariqa has a master at the root of its silsila, and is often named after the founding master. For example, the order usually credited by historians as the first *tariqa* was founded in the twelfth century by the Persian mystic Abd al-*Qadir* al-Jilani (1077-1166 CE), and is known as the *Qadiriyya* order.

Today there are many dozen *tariqas* around the globe. Sufi orders are known for service and compassion, and for flexible interfaith engagement and dialogue:

- The Chistiyya order of South Asia provides a good example. The tomb-shrine (called a *dargah*) of their founder, Moinuddin Chishty (1142-1236), is located in Ajmer, India. His *dargah* is the site of an annual pilgrimage for tens of thousands of individuals from all over the world, expecially from Central Asia and South Asia. In Sufism it is the death of a Saint, not the borth, that is celebrated, for at death they return to God, from where they originated: birth is a departure, death is a return. Pilgims to Ajmer include not only Muslims, but also include Hindus, Sikhs, and persons drawn from many religions besides Islam. The *dargah* of Moinuddin Chisty features large cooking pots, each called a *deg*. The diameter of the larger *deg*, donated by Akbar the Great, is over ten feet. Daily meals for the poor and any pilgrim that visits are cooked in the degs. Aside from food, other services are performed, fulfilling Moinuddin Chisthy's teaching, "Love toward All, Malice toward none." The Chishtiyya are not alone in performing regular acts of service, which is a common feature of Sufism around the globe. Chishtiyya Sufis seek direct experiences with God through service, but through music as well, having developed their own form of poetic/mystic music called Qawalli. Famous singers, called Qawwals, include Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (1948-1997) of Pakistan, considered a pioneer of the world music movement.
- The Mevlevi Order, known popularly as the Whirling Devishes, was founded by the famous poet Jalal al-din Rumi in central Turkey (1207-1273). Rumi was continued as arguably the most widely-read poet in the United States for the past twenty-five years, and one of the most widely-read poets in the world. He is famous for emphasizing mystic perspectives or life of God, and of the self: "You are not a drop in the Ocean; You are the entire Ocean in a drop!"

Sufis, like most mystics, seek direct experience of Truth, a direct connection with God, unmediated by priests, dogma, or ritual. For this reason they are often distrusted by the leaders of the more exteme sects of Islam who sometimes positions themselves between the believer and acces to the Divine, the Real. Today, in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, and other more extreme

parts of the Islamic world, Sufis are persecuted, and the tomb-shrines of their masters and saints are being destroyed in an ongoing "civil war" for the future of Islam.

Conclusion

Like most religions and ideologies, Islam developed over the course of centuries. In contrast to the traditional narrative of the founding of Islam: that the religion was revealed and formalized by Muhammad and the first four Caliphs, the history of Islam illustrates innovation, variety, and dynamism. From its origins in Muhammad's day as a Believer's Movement, the faith defined itself, established its own religious laws, formalized its educational system well ahead of Western Europe, and split into the numerous sects that form its "mosaic" of faith and practice. The variety encountered by the modern reader indicates that, in order to understand and engage with the world's most populous religion, study and dedication are needed more than rumor and conventional wisdom. Islam is not going away, and in fact is growing stronger, presenting an opportunity for coexistence and understanding for those intelligent enough and interested enough to build bridges of understanding and coexistence. The reader is invited to extend their knowledge and understanding in a time when wisdom and patience are in short supply when it comes to Islam and the Islamic world.

CHAPTER 17

Islamic Empires of the "Gunpowder Era"

> There is no list of the seven wonders of the early modern world. If there were, it would certainly include the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, the royal complex in Isfahan, Iran, and the Taj Mahal in Agra, India. These architectural and artistic achievements alone would justify the study of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires that produced them." Douglas E. Streusand, *Gunpowder Empires*, 1.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on three powerful Islamic empires established after the demise of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258: the Ottoman (Turkish, 1290s–1922), the Safavid (Persian, 1501-1736), and the Moghul dynasty of South Asia/India (Mongol/Persian, 1526-1857). Historian Marshall G.S. Hodgson referred to these three states as the "the empires of Gunpowder times" in his three-volume work *The Venture of Islam*. By classifying the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals as empires of "gunpowder times" he draws attention to the important adoption and even mastery of gunpowder technologies by these states. The efficient use of emergent gunpowder technologies allowed for administrative sophistication in these empires, the centralization of power, and the raising and equipping of ever-larger armies and navies. Importantly, Hodgson does not limit the adoption gunpowder technologies to these three Islamic states. Emergent European states—such as England and France during the Hundred Years War (1337-1453, see chapter ___)—also began mastering gunpowder-based weapons. The Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal states were consequently co-participants, perhaps even leaders in some respects, among nations spread across Asia and Europe in an emerging age of gunpowder technologies, and became important participants in what historians often call the Early Modern Era of world history (ca. 1450-1750).

These three empires undeniably held a dominant military position among their neighbors, based in significant measure upon gunpowder. But they were far more than mere military powers, and their global impact in government and administration, politics, culture, and religion is still present. As Douglas Streusand indicates above, anyone who has seen the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, been to the Jamieh Mosque complex in Isfahan, Iran, or stood beneath Qutb Minar or at the Taj Mahal in India must marvel at the obvious architectural accomplishment involved. Culturally, the civilizational and cultural achievements and heritage of these empires exercised a profound effect not only upon Islamic society, but also upon the world as a whole. Politically, the ways in which two of these empires fell to European powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (the Mughals and the Ottomans) has deeply affected the modern world. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that that many contemporary challenges in the Middle East have their origins in the fall and colonial dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire immediately following the end of World War One (1914-1918, see chapter 9).

Before proceeding to the historical narrative of the Islamic empires of the gunpowder era, we need to briefly address the continuing spread of Islam beyond the Middle East into Sub-

Saharan Africa and into Southeast Asia. By the end of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258, the faith of Islam, its ritual practices and culture had spread far beyond the formal borders of the Umayyad Empire (661-750) and into the regions of Saharan and Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, western China, and was poised to enter Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. While the Umayyad Empire was the product of military conquest—although the reader should remember that conversion to Islam did not generally happen by force, but occurred gradually over the course of centuries in most places—its was the peaceful effect and influences of Islamic traders, merchants, mystics, and missionaries that played the decisive role in religious expansion in these locations, not conquest. Nevertheless, one might stress the role that the Islamic gunpowder empires (especially the Ottomans and the Mughals) played in providing the stability necessary for the complex interaction of trade and conversion to proceed in new areas—at least in South and East Asia. That being said, let's turn attention to the first Islamic empire of the gunpowder era: the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Empire (1299-1922)

Founded in a military no-man's land between the more powerful Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Asia Minor and the long-lived Byzantine capital city of Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire had humble origins. Originating from a gathering of *ghazi* warriors (freelance frontier raiders and zealots) led by an Oghuz tribesman named Osman (r. 1298-1324), a fledgling state grew into on of the world's great empires, rivaling the earlier Roman Empire (see chapter ___) in size and power. Above all, the Ottoman state was founded upon military prowess. For example, the Ottoman cavalry, called *sipahi*, certainly commanded respect among their enemies, but the famous Janissary infantry was feared for centuries throughout central Europe, the Balkans, and Asia Minor. The Ottomans built a Mediterranean and Red Sea Navy as well, threatening Europe at sea, too. In their prime the Ottomans proved militarily superior to Europeans. Between the 1290s and 1699 they were decisively defeated only once —by the Mongol king Tamerlane (Persian, Timur-e Leng, or Timur the Lame, r. 1370-1405), founder of the Timurid Empire (1370-1507).

In addition to its military might, the Ottoman state was known for its comparatively efficient administration (at least during the first four-plus centuries of its existence). At it territorial height, the Ottoman Empire governed territories spanning Algeria in the West, Hungary in the North, Mesopotamia in the East, and the lower Nile River basin (modern Egypt and Sudan) in the South. Ruling such as vast territory required trained and dedicated ministers and bureaucrats, which the Ottoman Sultans were able to secure from the highest ranks fo the Janissary corps for much of the Empires history.

The history of the Ottoman Empire is commonly organized into three periods:

- Founding to the Fall of Constantinople (1299-1453)
- The Ottoman "Golden Age" (1453-1699)
- Decline and Fall (1699-1922)

Each period of Ottoman history will be presented with an overview of its achievements and challenges, followed by a discussion of prominent Sultans from the period and key events that occurred during their reign(s). Because the first period laid the military and administrative foundations of the Empire until the mid-1800s, considerable attention is paid to this time and its Sultans in the following narrative.

Founding of the Ottoman Empire to the Fall of Constantinople (1299-1453)

In the 1280s a Turkish warlord named Osman founded a small state in Asia Minor. The title Ottoman is taken from a European mispronunciation of "Osman." From this small base (see map 2), Osman and his fellow *ghazi* warriors raided the Byzantine Empire in the name of Islam. "Ghazi" is an Arabic title given to warrior-champions usually fighting along a frontier between Islamic Civilization and other neighboring states or civilizations. The root word may be translated as "raider." The Seljuk Turks were not the only Turkish bands to settle in Asia Minor Turkish *ghazis* in the thirteenth century formed warrior brotherhoods along the Byzantine border in Asia Minor, led by Emirs ("Commanders," like Osman), and Sufi sheikhs (Sufism will be explained in more detail, below). The more successful the Emir the more likely they were to attract *ghazi* followers. Osman proved to be a very successful Emir, and his territory and army consequently grew. By the time he died in 1324, the nascent state had more than tripled in size, and Osman's following was stable enough they he founded a dynasty that would last into the 1920s.

These military origins of the state formed its core identity: the Ottoman Sultans were supposed to be first and foremost ghazis. Most of the Sultans in the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries were true *ghazis*, joining their troops in battle. Known for their prowess on the battlefield and their ruthlessness in determining succession within the family, the Ottomans, when compared to the Abbasids (see previous chapter), were not great patrons of the arts and sciences. Gifted with talented and determined leaders beginning with Osman, the Ottomans nevertheless exhibited three definitive characteristics: First, allegiance to the Ottoman imperial dynasty, second, adherence to Sunni Islam, and, third, ethnic domination of the Turkish-speaking. These characteristics, together with sustained military superiority, allowed the Ottoman Empire to last over six hundred years, and to spread across significant portions of three continents, beginning with Osman I and his ghazi struggle against the Byzantine Empire.

Factors favoring Osman and the rise of the Ottoman State

There are several reasons for Ottoman military successes against the Byzantines during this period. Osman and the sultans that followed possessed distinct advantages vis-à-via the Byzantines, advantages that no former Muslim Dynasty enjoyed.

Consequences of the Battle of Manzikert (1071). The Byzantine Empire, the eastern remnant of the Roman Empire, had been weakened both militarily and materially by another group of Turks, the Seljuks, in the two centuries prior to the time of Osman. The Battle of Manzikert (1071 CE, see chapter ___) eliminated a major element of the Byzantine army. The lost troops and commanders were sorely missed in the coming centuries. With the loss of much of Asia Minor following that battle, important resources (food, timber, ores) were also lost. The Byzantine emperor, Romanus IV, was captured during the battle, and although he was eventually set free, the event precipitated a civil war and emboldened the Emperor's rivals. As if the humiliations associated with the defeat were not enough, the Crusaders hastened the fall of the empire.

Tukification of Anatolia. In the decades after Manzikert, Anatolia had become fully "turkified" (as some historians call the Turkish cultural and social transformation of Asia Minor in the 11th and 12th centuries) during this same period of time. The population overwhelmingly converted to Islam. The reasons for this are not as clear as historians would like, but the include

tax advantages enjoyed by Muslims and a widespread preference for Islam (which had no formal clergy) as compared to dogmatic orthodoxy and governance through an ordained imperial priesthood. Over time the process of conversion adopted and transformed common Christian symbols into Islamic ones: the Christian Trinity was changed into a combination of Allah, Muhammad, and Ali, while the Twelve Apostles became the Twelve Imams. Convers adopted Turkish custom and language essentially completing the process of turkification by the time of Osman. Osman, therefore, could re-deploy, re-arm, and re-supply quickly by drawing upon a nearby Muslim population, an advantage not enjoyed by previous Muslim rulers in the fight against Byzantium.

The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204). Crusaders had originally planned the re-conquest of Jerusalem by invading Egypt, and establishing a southern base from which to take the Holy City. The crusade was underfunded, and dissension split the command structure. Many leaders simply deserted, along with their knights, footmen, and archers. They abandoned plans to invade Egypt. Rather than unite with the Byzantines, the Crusaders took Constantinople itself in 1204, and established their own state, the Latin Empire, which lasted until 1261. This, too weakened the Byzantines in Asia Minor, and opened a path of conquest for Osman.

Ottoman Code of Military Honor. The Ottomans developed a strong military and administrative system that eventually overpowered the Byzantines (and indeed overpowered all other rivals, with the brief exception of Tamerlane, for the next three centuries). During the time of Osman, ghazi society produced a defined warrior caste, grounded in its own code of chivalry, called *futuwwa* (Arabic, "young, or youthful, manliness"). The Code of *futuwwa* emphasized loyalty to one's leader, loyal camaraderie, and dedication to the success the battle against Byzantium. Additionally, ghazi leaders were regarded as spiritual masters, members of the *sufi* brotherhoods (formal groups of Muslim religious mystics), and thus leaders commanded spiritual, as well as military, respect.

Other Notable Sultans of the Founding Period.

- Orhan (r. 1324-1360). Osman was, of course the pre-eminent early Sultan, but his son Orhan earned a place in history as well. A conflict over the Byzantine throne in 1345 led Emperor John Cantacuzenus to ally with Orhan. The alliance was sealed by his marriage to the Emperor's daughter, Theodora. The outbreak of Bubonic Plague in Constantinople in 1347 further weakened the Byzantine state. Thereafter, moving across the Dardanelles Strait in 1347, the Turks established a permanent bridgehead in Europe at Gallipoli. They now occupied territories in Asia Minor and in Europe, a prelude to the eventual surrounding and fall of Constantinople a century later
- Murad I (r. 1360-1389) and the Janissary Crops. Murad I organized the Janissary Corps using Christian boys conscripted into military service under the *devshirme* system (English, "Children-collection"). The *devshirme* was, essentially, a tax on children (although volunteers were accepted as well). Imperial *devshirme* administrators would canvass a Christian district, collect young boys, and enroll them into one of four institutions: (1) the military (as soldiers or commanders), (2) the Palace administration (where some individual Janissary attained the office of Grand Vezir, (Prime Minister), (3) the Scribes, (fiscal administrators), or (4) the '*ulama* (Arabic, "Scholars," in this case Religious Scholars). The Janissaries were the slaves of the Sultan' (who often referred to them as "*my* Janissaries"). Conversion to Islam was universal, and conscripts could not be an orphan or an only child. Although this system offends modern sensibilities, the

response of Christian families at the time was mixed: many viewed the *devshirme* as promoting their family fortunes and bribed the "tax collectors" to take their sons, while others resisted to the point of disfiguring their boys. Trained from a young age, the Janissaries were fierce warriors. When the Ottomans adopted gunpowder weapons on a grand scale in the first half of the fifteenth century, the Janissaries became truly formidable.

- Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402) Taking charge following the death of Murad, Beyezid completed the conquest of Byzantine territory in Thrace by 1391, up to the walls of Constantinople itself. By 1395, the Ottoman state had also expanded into modern Greece. By 1402, only fortified coastal cities such as Constantinople withstood the Ottomans. Ottoman successes, however, attracted the attention of the Mongol Conqueror Tamerlane (also called Timur the Lame. At the Battle of Ankara (1402) Tamerlane's invasion force defeated the Ottomans. Bayezid was taken prisoner, and died in captivity. Fortunately—from the Ottoman perspective—Tamerlane showed little interest in permanently occupying Anatolia. A civil war thereafter broke out among four of Bayezid's sons. One of them, Mehmet I eventually emerged victorious in 1413. The re-emergent Ottoman state set its sights once again on Constantinople, and the conquest of the Byzantines.
- Mehmet I (r. 1413-1421) Mehmet I faced two difficult tasks in the aftermath of the defeat at Ankara. First, he needed to consolidate the fragmented state. Each of the four brothers that participated in the wars of the Ottoman Interregnum derived power from upon their experience in provincial administration. Mehmet I eventually ended the civil war by defeating his siblings. Second, having re-consolidated the Ottoman state, Mehmet moved the capital from Bursa in Asia, to Edirne, in Europe. This provided a nearby European base of operations for the eventual conquest of Constantinople over thirty years later.
- Murad II (1421-1444, and 1446-1451) Murad II paved the way for the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Murad II knew that the effort necessary to defeat the city's defenses required both a powerful army in the form on Janissaries and *sipahi*, but a strong navy as well. The Sultan consequently encouraged the piracy of corsair raiders against Christians in the Agean Sea in order to weaken the Byzantines, and eventually incorporated them into an Ottoman fleet based at Gallipoli in command of the Dardanelles Strait. Murad II's successes, however, provoked yet another crusade, known as the Crusade of Varna (1443-1444). Ladislaus III, King of Poland, (also Ladislaus I of Hungary) took command. The Crusader armies engaged the Ottomans in a series of battles, culminating at Varna in November, 1444. Outnumbered, the Crusaders had managed to defeat much of the Ottoman cavalry and irregular infantry. Murad feigned a retreat with his remaining Janissaries, luring the Crusaders into a trap. Ladislaus was killed, ending any serious European threat to a siege. With a European threat removed, the Ottomans planned the difficult conquest of Constantinople in earnest.
- Mehmet II (r. 1444-46 and 1451-81, known as "the Conqueror) and the Fall of Constantinople. Mehmet accomplished the capture of Constantinople, a prize that had eluded the enemies of Byzantium since the city was founded in the early fourth century. The siege and subsequent fall of Constantinople therefore appropriately occupies a unique place in the Islamic, and in the Western, imagination, and deserves deeper attention in our narrative (see also chapter ___ on the prelude to the Christian Reformation). Besides, it's a good, epic story.

Founded by Emperor Constantine the Great in 330, Constantinople was the capital of the Eastern half of the Rome for nearly a thousand additional years under the Byzantines. It was the largest and wealthiest city in Europe during most of that time. The city had withstood numerous assaults over the centuries thanks to its impregnable walls that rose to nearly one hundred feet high in places, fifteen miles long, and stacked in multiple parallel rows up to three deep. In addition to the walls that enclosed the city on the west, the Byzantines had stretched a giant chain across the Golden Horn to Galata, preventing access to the city from the Black Sea: ships attempting entrance would run afoul of the chain and risk destruction of their hulls. Inside these fortifications some fifty thousand inhabitants and about seven thousand troops prepared for the long siege.

Surrounding the walls, the Ottomans massed nearly eighty thousand troops, including about ten thousand Janissaries. They were comparatively well armed, but the effect of their numbers was reduced severely by the walls. The Ottomans had one decisive advantage, however. They were among the world's first "gunpowder empires," and had worked to perfect siege artillery. Although the defenders expected an artillery assault, the Ottomans exceeded their expectations. Armed with several medium-sized cannon, the Turks added large-scale siege artillery, thanks to the engineering skills of a Hungarian named Orban. He designed one particularly large cannon named "The Basilica" that measured nearly twenty-seven feet long and had sufficient power to project a six hundred-pound ball over a mile. The resulting damage to the walls was significant. The cannon's main drawback was that it could only be fired two or three times a day. This delay between firing, and the Turk's chronically poor aim with these primitive instruments, allowed defenders to reconstruct sections almost as fast as breaches were formed. Additionally, Mehmet employed sappers who tunneled under the walls and attempted to set fires or detonate explosive charges. To counter this, the Byzantines employed an engineer named Johannes Grant, who had counter-tunnels dug, facilitating underground combat. The attack on the walls gradually eroded defenses, but the siege risked descending into a stalemate.

Mehmet also attempted an assault by sea. His main obstacle was a massive chain that stretched from the city across the Golden Horn to the Galata peninsula. The chain could be lowered to allow friendly ships entrance to the harbor, but could be raised. When raised, the chain would tear open the hull of any ship foolish enough to attempt entrance. Not only did the raised chain keep Ottoman ships out, it also restricted resupply of the city so long as it was raised. Mehmet hoped to enter the harbor and end all resupply, and threaten attack from the sea. He eventually elected to ignore the chain altogether, and in dramatic style. He constructed a roadway of greased logs, and deployed gangs of men to pull his ships across land and into the harbor. The inhabitants of Constantinople were amazed to see what to many appeared to be ships sailing across land. The presence of the ships did not lead to a successful amphibious assault on the city, but did force the defenders to draw forces away from the walls to defend against an attack from the east.

On 28 May, Mehmet gave his soldiers a day of rest. Shortly after midnight on 29 May 1453, the final assault began in earnest. Ottoman irregulars form Anatolia breached the walls, and entered the city, only to be repelled by the defenders. The Sultan then sent in the Janissaries, led by the twenty-five year old Sipahi, Ulubatli Hasan. Under a rain of arrows, Hasan successfully scaled the walls and personally planted the Ottoman flag for

the first time within the city. Shot through with twenty-seven arrows, Hasan's courage and the sight of the flag inspired the other soldiers. The city was soon taken. Mehmet II later entered on a white horse (interpreted by some Christians to represent the white horse and conqueror of the end times mentioned in the biblical Revelation of John). He allowed his troops to plunder the riches of the city for three days, but stopped them short of its complete destruction. It is estimated that about four thousand people died in Constantinople as a result, significant, but comparatively few when viewed in light of the sack of the city by Crusaders in 1204, or the bloody Crusader sack of Jerusalem in 1099. When the three days had ended, Mehmet issued a decree that all inhabitants still in hiding were to come out, and would be allowed to occupy their homes and practice their religion(s). The great church of Hagia Sophia (Greek, "Holy Wisdom"), built by the Roman emperor Justinian the Great in 537 was subsequently converted into a mosque (it is now a museum, displaying Ottoman and Christian art and artifacts). Mehmet's victory was complete, the city was renamed—and as the 1940s refrain goes, "it's Istanbul, not Constantinople, now."

The Ottoman "Golden Age" (1453-1571)

With the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 the core lands of the Ottoman Empire were securely in place. The Empire control most of the Balkan Peninsula north to the Danube River and controlled most of Asia Minor. However, rather than completing Ottoman conquests, it set the stage for a more dramatic age of expansion under a series of capable Sultans. This era of expansion coincided, however, with the rise of the Safavid Empire to the east, in Persia (Modern Iran). Consequently, the Ottoman Sultans first curbed Safavid eastward expansion. Thereafter, the Sultans conquered the Middle East, the Hijaz, Mesopotamia, and North Africa. Although the Ottomans were able to maintain this expansive territorial possession until the end of the Seventeenth century the military and commercial might of European powers was rising steadily, whereas the Ottomans were generally maintain a military status quo. Twice the Turks had laid siege to the city of Vienna (in modern Austria), first in 1529 under Sultan Suleiman I, "the Magnificent" (1520-1566) and in 1683 under Sultan Mehmet IV (r. 1687-1691), nearly expanding the Empire deeper into central and western Europe. The Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) marked the first significant loss of Ottoman territory in Europe after the conquest of Constantinople, and began a very long era of decline.

Notable Sultans of the Ottoman Golden Age

- Selim I (r. 1512-1520, "the Grim") carried Ottoman expansion southward into the regions of Syria and Egypt, focusing upon expansion into Muslim, largely Arab, lands rather than continuing a policy of aggressive European expansion. In order to move into the domains of the Arab Middle East (Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt), Selim first stopped Safavid expansion in 1514 (see below), and thereafter conquered most of Arab Middle East. The regions of Syria and Egypt had been under the control of the Mameluk Sultans, who had much earlier defeated the Mongol leader Hulegu at the Battle of Ayn Jalut in 1260. Syria and Palestine were the first territories to fall to Selim's armiesm in 1516, followed by the Hijaz (including the holy cities of Mecca and Medina), culminating in the conquest of Mamluk Egypt in 1517. The territory of the Ottoman empire thus *quadrupled* in two year's time: Selim added about one billion acres of land to the already-existing imrpessive Ottoman possessions.

Selim probably acquired his soubriquet "the Grim" from the practice of executing officers and Vezirs that did not meet his expectations. One anecdote related that a new Vezir asked—at the time of his appointment—for advance notice of his eventual execution so as to have time to put his personal affairs in order. Selim laughed and admitted that he would indeed execute the vezir at some future time, but that he currently lacked an adequate successor—otherwise he would happily oblige. This prompted an infamous Turkish curse—may you become one of Selim's Vezirs!

Selim took a number of new titles as the result of his victories, among them "Emperor of the Two Lands" (Europe and Asia—later adding Africa to the list with the conquest of Egypt in 1517). Following the defeat of the Safavids, he took the title *Padishah* (Persian for "Master of Kings"). As the guardian of Mecca and Medina, he took the title *khadim haramain sharifain* (Guardian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries). He was the "Khagan (Emperor) of the Two Seas" (Mediterranean and Red). In 1517 he "accepted" the title Caliph of Islam at the hands of Mutawwakil III, the last of the so-called Shadow Caliphs (the remnant of the Abbasid dynasty who managed to escape to Cairo following the conquest of Baghdad in 1258), receiving the sword of Muhammad as a symbol of Selim's claim to the Caliphate (The sword today rests in the treasury of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul). Although Selim I was now the Caliph (in title, at least), an "Ottoman Caliphate" as such was never recognized throughout Islam as a whole.

- Suleiman I "The Magnificent" (r. 1520-1566), whose long reign corresponded with that of the powerful Habsburg rulers Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor 1519-1556) and Philip II (King of Spain 1556-1598). Like Selim I, Suleiman added significant to Ottoman territorial possessions.
  - Conquests in Europe. Suleiman completed the conquest of the Balkans taking Belgrade in 1521. The Island of Rhodes, home of the crusader Knights Hospitaller, was conquered in 1522. These victories opened the way northward. Making skillful use of field artillery and the Janissary Corps, Hungary fell in 1526 following the First Battle of Mohacs, making the Ottomans the greatest power in Eastern Europe. In 1529 the (unsuccessful) First Siege of Vienna marked the high tide of Ottoman expansion into central Europe.
  - The Middle East. Suleiman dispatched his army into Mesopotamia, taking the city of Tabriz without resistance in 1534. In 1535, Suleiman entered Baghdad, bolstering the Sultan's claim as the Caliph of Islam. Although Suleiman was never able to completely defeat the Safavids, he did acquire the area around the Persian Gulf, together with a promise that the Shah would respect the Ottoman borders and cease raids into imperial territory.
  - North Africa and the Mediterranean. Further expansion into the Mediterranean and North Africa required the construction of a large Ottoman fleet. Suleiman appointed Khayr al-Din Pasha (Admiral, 1538-1571) to head the navy and constructed a new fleet that Suleiman intended to be as big as all other Mediterranean fleets combined. Known in the West as Barbarossa ("Red Beard"), the Ottoman navy helped take ports and coastal areas in Libya (Tripolitania), Tunisia, and Algeria by 1541. Ottoman naval dominance of the Mediterranean was then considered complete. After the reign of Suleiman, however, Barbarossa was defeated at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Although a significant morale-boosting naval victory for European states in the

region, the Ottoman navy was soon rebuilt, and continued to threaten Spain, southern France, and the Italian city-states of Venice and Genoa.

Suleiman's reign marked the high point of Ottoman power. But Suleiman accomplished much mire than military expansion and consolidation. He is considered to be much more than a military figure in the Middle East and in Islam. Known in the West as "the Magnificent," he is called "the Lawgiver" (*al-qanuni*) in the East in honor of his numerous administrative, educational, and legal reforms:

- Legal Reform. Suleiman compiled a unified code of Ottoman law that endured for more than three centuries. Legal reforms included the reduction of the number of criminal offenses receiving the death penalty, laws granting rights to Christians and protecting Jews (prompting further Jewish emigration into the Ottoman empire). Other reforms addressed taxation and trade import-export duties and fees, promoting Ottoman commerce and trade.
- Educational Reform. Suleiman expanded the number of primary schools (*maktab*), expanding a basic education in literacy, Islamic theology, and the Qur'an. He also established some eight secondary schools (*madrasa*) for young men covering more advanced subjects such as astronomy, grammar, metaphysics (a branch of philosophy), and astrology. He also built a number of libraries.
- Cultural Achievements. Although not technically "reforms," Suleiman's cultural achievements are noteworthy. Although initially constructed in 1469, Suleiman significantly renovated and expanded the famous Topkapi Sarai (Palace) and built the famous Suleimaniye Mosque, both in Istanbul. He also established artistic and literary societies, and wrote his own poetry:

  The people think of wealth and power as the greatest fate,
  But in this world a spell of health is the best state.
  What men call sovereignty is a worldly strife and constant war;
  Worship of God is the highest throne, the happiest of all estates (Mansel, 84).

- Selim II "the Sot" or "the Sari" (r. 1566-1574). Known in the West as Selim the Sot (the drunkard) and in the East as Selim the Sari (the blonde), his reign was marked by signs of decay and imperial neglect, a turning point in Ottoman fortunes. Some sources described Selim II was the first Ottoman Sultan to willfully refuse to accompany his troops into battle, preferring instead to remain in the palace harem precincts, engaging in drunken parties and otherwise ignoring his *ghazi* duties. Whether or not this description is accurate, it appears true that Selim I did not command on the battlefield and that palace life under him was far from dull. His military commanders achieved mixed results on the battlefield. The Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor Maximillian II was forced to yield control of the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia to the Ottomans in 1568. This success was offset by losses to the Russian Czars near Astrakhan in 1560, and the naval defeat at Lepanto in 1571. Although the Empire did not suffer permanent setback of significance during his reign, withdrawal into the palace harem, an increase in palace intrigues and assassinations among his wives and concubines, and heightened conspiracy against the throne and princely heirs, became common among succeeding Sultans, and was considered a mark of decline for the Empire.

Decline of the Ottoman Empire (1699-1798)

The period from the Second Battle/Siege of Vienna (1683) until the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte (1798) was one of gradual decline for the Ottoman Empire. Keep in mind, however, that the Empire does not entirely end until 1922, nearly two-and-a-half centuries later! The decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire, like its Roman predecessor, was long and drawn out.

As the Sultans withdrew from public life—particularly from command of the military forces of the Empire—their Vezirs ("ministers") increasingly took control. One very powerful group of Veziers came from a single family, the Köprülü family of Albania. This family created, in effect, a dynasty with a dynasty. As was the case with other powerful dynasties we have studied, the rulers eventually became more a figurehead, while the Grand Veziers ruled behind the scenes. There were an unprecedented six Köprülü Grand Veziers between 1656 and 1703. Kara Mustafa Pasha (Grand Vezier from 1676-1683) oversaw the last serious Ottoman effort at territorial expansion in central Europe in 1699. Following a disastrous defeat, the Ottomans lost significant territory in Europe for the first time.

- The Battle of Vienna (1683) and the Peace of Karlowitz (1699). Grand Vezier Kara Mustafa Pasha laid siege to Vienna in July of 1683, surrounding the city with about 100,000 soldiers—as compared to the 10,000 Viennese soldiers guarding the city and its formidable walls. He made significant progress by the end of August, broached a large section of the walls, and preparations were made for a full-scale assault on the city. The Polish army, under the command of Jon III Sobieski (r. 1674-1696) arrived on 13 September 1683, and using a successful flanking attack defeated the Ottomans and lifted the Siege. This would be the last time the Ottomans seriously threatened central Europe. Kara Mustafa Pasha was executed by order of the Sultan in December in Belgrade. Legend maintains, however, that the enterprise was not a total loss for the Ottomans—they left behind several bags of greenish beans that the Viennese roasted and mixed with hot water, introducing Turkish Coffee into European culture.

  A coalition of European powers capitalized upon the Ottoman defeat over the next decade and a half. Pope Innocent XI (r. 1676-89), popularly called the "Savior of Hungary," initiated the formation of The Holy League of 1684. The Holy League's members included the Habsburg-ruled Austrian Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, the Holy Roman Empire, the League of Venice, and the Czardom of Russia. The Ottomans were defeated at the Second Battle of Mohacs in 1687, and the Holy League eventually forced the Ottomans to negotiate peace. The Peace of Karlowitz (1699) confirmed the territory of the various nations involved, dividing the newly acquired lands according to whichever power had military possession of a region at the time the peace was concluded. While the Ottomans maintained possession of Belgrade, the Austrian Empire gained much of the territory of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Hungary, with effective control of the autonomous principality of Transylvania. The Austrian state gained some sixty thousand square miles of land in Hungary alone giving them a position of supremacy in Central Europe. A year later, the Ottomans ceded lands around the Sea of Azov to the Russian rulers based on the terms negotiated in the Treaty of Constantinople (1700).

- The Tulip Era (1718-1730). Ottoman rulers and the urban elite of Istanbul have effectively withdrew from military enterprise during this period of time. The Long-standing focus upon military accomplishment—a core element of Ottoman identity since the time of Osman I—was replaced by a widespread "tulip mania." The tulip grew in popularity, becoming a symbol of wealth and position as elites competed with each other to produce grater variety and beauty. The streets and gardens of Istanbul were lined with tulips (and still are in many places today). Other arts flourished, particularly those arts that showcased tulips, such as public fountains and gardens. Miniature portrait painting increased, often depicting the painting's subject in connection with tulips. Tulip cultivation came to form an important part of the Ottoman economy, particularly in trade exports, and subsequent artificially inflated prices led to the Tulip rebellions of the 1720s.
- The Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-74. The period of relative calm during the Tulip Era was followed by a series of wars involving Austria, but principally with Russia in which the Ottomans lost more and more territory, culminating in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) and the formal annexation of the Khanate of Crimea by the Russian Tzars in 1783. The Russo-Ottoman War of 1668-74 and related treaties/annexations led to a broader European set of concerns known as "the Eastern Question" or as "Eastern Question Politics," meaning the deep concern expressed by European Powers about how the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire would effect the balance of Power in Europe: Great Britain was eventually drawn into the Eastern Question (as were other European powers), fighting Russia for dominance of the Black Sea in the Crimean War (1853-56). The decline of the Ottoman Empire was not an internal concern alone, but increasingly involved the Great Powers of Europe into conflicts arguably leading to the Serbian assassination of the Austrian Archduke in 1914, provoking the commencement of World War One.

Early European Involvement in the Ottoman Middle East (1798-1839)

Between 1798 and 1839 European Powers and Citizens of Europe became increasing involved militarily and commercially in the Ottoman Middle East. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and Syria in 1798 intensified European designs upon Ottoman territories and markets that lasted into the twentieth century—and beyond. The period between 1798 and 1839 will

- The Napoleonic Invasion of Egypt (1798-1801). Napoleon's activities in Egypt and Syria must be viewed in the larger context of the French Revolution (see Chapter 7). Pursuant to orders from The Directory, then in control of the government of France, Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798. The invasion itself was of military insignificance. Its long-term political, cultural, and intellectuals effects were profound:
  - Europeans were introduced to the culture and civilization of ancient Egypt. The pyramids and other monuments and temples excited the European imagination. French scientists established the *Institute d'Égypte* in 1791, which published the highly influential *Description de l'Égypte*. Additionally, the discovery of the famous Rosetta Stone in 1799 allowed Frenchman Jean-François Champollion to eventually translate the hieroglyphics, pioneering the field of Egyptology and greatly contributing to the science of modern archeology.
  - Napoleon engaged French engineers who conducted a hydrological survey of the lower Nile River, which formed the basis of modern attempts to control the Nile. This survey eventually led to the creation of large-scale irrigation works such as canals,

barrages, and dams along the Nile. The Suez Canal drew inspiration from this survey. Irrigation and the cultivation of cash crops for sale to Europeans (indigo for dyes and, later-on, cotton) increasing European commercial dependence upon Egypt and drawing the growing Egyptian economy every more deeply into emergent industrial projects in Britain and France.

Napoleon had easily captured Egypt in 1798, but he was never able to capitalize on his victory and create the hoped-for increased hardship for his British enemies. Perhaps he never intended to, and instead focused his attention on returning to France and establishing a personal empire. Be that as may, the British navy, commanded by Admiral Horatio Nelson, defeated Napoleon's ships in August 1798 at the Battle of Aboukir Bay (also known as the Battle of the Nile). Although the French maintained possession of much territory of Egypt and Syria, Napoleon was unable to move on toward British India without a navy, and in fact could not effectively resupply his existing army in the field for long. When the French army left Egypt in 1801, the area returned to Ottoman control. Two important trends were, however, followed Napoleon's invasion and European military success generally: the reform of the Ottoman Army and the emergence of an autonomous ruler in Egypt: Muhammad Ali, subjects that are addressed in chapter _____.

Conclusion (Ottoman Empire to 1800)

The Ottoman Empire began in the thirteenth century as a small band of ghazi warriors fighting the Byzantines along the northern-western coasts of Asia Minor. Under the leadership of several capable Sultans and commanders, they successfully expanded into Europe by the fourteenth century. There they began the *devshirme* tax, which provided Christian boys for the elite Janissary Corps, as well as for Ottoman administration. Following a setback delivered by Tamerlane at the Battle of Ankara (1402), Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror succeeded in capturing the city of Constantinople—which had already withstood attempts at conquest for nearly a thousand years. Based in Istanbul (formerly Constantinople), the empire expanded into the Middle East under the capable Sultan Selim I, and into Europe and North Africa under Suleiman the Magnificent, the empire's legendary 16th century "Golden Age." Shortly after Suleiman, Veziers ("ministers") took effective control of the operation of the Empire from the increasingly detached and aloof Sultans, culminating in the territorial losses inflicted following the Second Siege of Vienna (1683) and the subsequent Peace of Karlowitz (1699). The empire thereafter began a slow period of decline from 1699 to 1922. The ways in which the Ottoman Empire died following World War One, and the manner of its territorial dismemberment by European powers (principally Britain and France) had a profound affect on many of the conflicts that trouble the Middle East today. The defunct Ottoman Empire still casts a long and troubling shadow over the Middle East and the Balkans.

The Safavid Empire (1501-1736)

While the Ottomans were reaching the zenith of their power in the first half of the sixteenth century, a dynasty called the Safavids emerged to the East, in Iran (Persia). The Safavid rulers were able to secure control over virtually all of the territory of modern Iran, and were the

first to re-establish a unified Persian Empire since the defeat of the Sassanids (see chapter ___) Their realm is called the Safavid Empire, and their culture is referred to as Safavid Persia. They transformed Persia from a predominantly Sunni region to Twelver Shi'ism, encouraged a re-awakening Persian language, arts, and architecture, all trends that reformed the region along more ancient Persian lines and re-instilled Persian identity.

The history of the Safavid Empire may be divided into four periods:

- 1501-1524: Establishment of the Empire under Shah Isma'il I (r. 1501-1524)
- 1524-1588: Tribal Hegemony under the Qizilbash
- 1588-1629: Shah Abbas I (r. 1588-1629) and Imperial Resurgence
- 1629-1736: Decline and Demise

Shah Ismail I and the Establishment of the Safavid Empire (1501-1524)

In 1501 an army composed of some seven thousand warriors drawn from the Qizilbash tribal confederation conquered the city of Baku near the Caspian Sea. They subsequently entered they city of Tabriz, where their leader was crowned Shah of Azerbaijan and given the royal name Ismail (Ishmael). The new Shah, believed to have descended from the Safavi family of Islamic religious leaders (hence dynastic name "Safavids"). Taking advantage of political disunity and infighting between a number of smaller regional kingdoms, Shah Ismail steadily conquered one area after another, expanding south and east. The conquest of core Persian territories, from Armenia and the borders of Mesopotamia in the West to the borders of Central Asia and the Oxus River in the East, was completed by 1511. In that same year, Safavid forces crossed into eastern Anatolia, areas claimed by the Ottoman Empire.

Selim I (see above) acceded to the Ottoman throne in 1512, and counterattacked by invading Persia in 1514, eventually engaging Ismail in a major battle at Chaldiran (located west of Tabriz). Here the Ottoman mastery of basic gunpowder technology proved decisive: Ottoman heavy artillery and musket-armed Janissaries proved invincible. The decisive Ottoman victory at Chaldiran forced Ismail to yield eastern Anatolia, northern Mesopotamia, Azerbaijan, including the capital at Tabriz. The defeat deeply impacted Ismail, who claimed to be divine—a status which the defeat obviously negated. In one of his many poems, Ismail described himself as "The mystery of I AM—the truth—is hidden in this my heart. I AM the Absolute Truth and what I say is Truth." Although Ismail's career of conquest was effectively over, wars between the Safavids and Ottomans continued until 1555, when the Treaty of Amasya was concluded. The core lands of Persia East of Azerbaijan remained effectively in Safavid control.

Ismail converted to Shi'i Islam, and forced the conversion of the dominant Sunni majority in Persia to become Twelver Shi'ites, too. He imported numerous Shi'ite clerics to Iran, many from Syria, killed Sunni clerics, destroyed Sunni mosques and madrasas, established a feudal theocracy as the divinely anointed heat of both the religion and the state. Inclusion of Shi'ite clerics in the government of the Safavid state brought certain advantages. For example, Twelver Shi'ism allowed for legal innovations that could be subject to imperial influence, and collectively represent the Hidden (or 12th) Imam, placing them in an influential place within Islamic eschatology, allowing the clerics to act politically in support of the Shah. The adoption of Twelver Shi'ism and the incorporation of a powerful clergy into the structure of the state l;ent legitimacy to the Shahs, buttressing their claim to rule by divine right. Conversion to Twelver Shi'ism under the Safavids exercises a deep influence on Iran to this day, containing the largest number of Shi'ites of any country in the world. Modern Shiite clerics, Such as the Grand

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989), leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution of 1979 and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, an example of a modern theocracy.

Tribal Hegemony under the Qizilbash (1524-1588)

The Qizilbash ("Red heads", referring to the red hats they wore) was a confederation of Turcoman (Turks, but not Ottomans) tribal warriors located in the region of Azerbaijan at the time Ismail conquered the area and became Shah. The tribesmen bore a resemblance to the *ghazi* warriors of the early Ottomans—devout Sufi Muslims with a master-disciple spiritual organization. They owed absolute allegiance to their *murshids* (spiritual masters), allowing for highly effective military control through religious devotion. Like Ismail, they converted to Twelver Shi'ism, or perhaps did so under Ismail's command as their spiritual master. Ismail relied heavily upon them militarily. Although defeated at Chaldiran, Qizilbash warriors saved the Safavid state, waging battles against the Ottomans in the West and Uzbeki Turks in central Asia to the East.

Perhaps Ismail depended upon the Qizilbash too much. Having relied upon religious power and influence to advance his claim to an imperial throne, the Qizilbash came to view their close physical proximity to the Shah as a guarantee of the political, military, and spiritual fortunes. The Qizilbash essnetially sequestered and controlled the Shah. As early as 1510 Ismail began appointing Iranians (a native Indo-European people of Persia) to high office, attempting to dilute Qizilbash influence. This led to Qizilbash resistance at the very time when Ismail's military dependence on the tribesmen increased in the face of sustained Ottoman attacks.

Qizilbash dependency continued under Ismail's successor, Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524-1576), due in large part to the pressing crises associated with fighting the Ottomans *and* the Uzbeks in an ongoing two-front war. The Peace of Amasya (1555) eliminated the more serious Ottoman threat to the West. The Shah subsequently through military raids forced the mass migration of nearly half a million Caucasians (peoples living in or near the Caucuses Mountains located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea) into Persia. Nearly 300,000 Armenians, 200,000 Georgians, over 100,000 Circassians immigrated into the heart of Safavid Empire, creating in the span of a few years a military, mercantile, and bureaucratic class under his control as a counterweight to Qizilbash power and influence. Under the Shah's effective control, and upon his personal command, the immigrants replaced the Qizilbash. The Qizilbash were not removed from power in a moment, for rebellion and revolt continued after the death of Tahmasp I, until the reign of Shah Abbas (r. 1588-1629).

Shah Abbas I and Imperial Resurgence

Shah Abbas was the most powerful of the Safavid Shahs, but that was not the case in the early years of his reign when the threat of a return to Qizilbash control remained a continuing possibility. Following Tahmasp's lead, Abbas molded the Caucasians into a class of slave-soldiers, merchant, and bureaucrats called the Third Force. Over time, these Caucasian slaves, called *ghulams*, penetrated important level of the state and society, leading to a meritocratic system (where a person was promoted to office or gained social influence by merit, that is, by their skill, talent, and personal accomplishment, rather than by their connections to powerful persons).

Abbas, having eliminated any immediate Qizilbash threat, began to re-establish Safavid control over provinces lost to the Uzbeks and the Ottomans. In 1598 he moved eastward using artillery against the Uzbeks, taking the cites of Herat and Balkh (both located in modern

Afghanistan, with Balkh just south of the Oxus River—the traditional boundary into Central Asia). Having reduced the Uzbek threat, Abbas took on the Ottomans next. The Safavid had not defeated the Ottomans in a major confrontation since Chaldiran. Making effective use of deceptive maneuvers and an excellent spy system, Abbas was able to stay one step ahead of the Ottomans, eliminating their forward base at Nahavand, leading to a decisive defeat of the Ottomans near Tabriz in 1605. The resulting Treaty of Nasuh Pasha (1612) consolidated Persian victories, and led to several years of peace with the Ottomans.

In 1598 Abbas moved the Safavid capital eastward to Isfahan. Lavishing patronage to artists and architects to adorn the new capital, the city became a center for the revival of Persian arts. For example, building upon the export of woven Persian rugs and carpets begun by Tahmasp I, Abbas opened European markets, gaining significant profits in the exchange as Europeans began importing "eastern" luxury goods (including, also, Ming ceramics from China). Silk production, used heavily in the carpet and textiles trade, became a lucrative royal monopoly. Abbas hired architect to build impressive public and religious monuments and buildings. The Nashq-e Jahan Square in Isfaham features a park covering over 20 acres near the Grand Bazaar, and the impressive Shah Mosque. The Shah Mosque and the Square are UNESCO World Heritage sites. Composed of seven colors of mosaic tile, the Shah Mosque (construction began in 1598), the mosque portal is ninety feet tall, with minarets reaching to 170 feet, and an inner courtyard measuring nearly eighty square yards. The Mosque introduced a new style of Islamic Architecture, and is widely considered a masterpiece of world Architecture.

Decline and demise of the Safavid Empire (1629-1736)

Abbas had successfully tamed internal Qizilbash domination and regained territory from the Uzbeks and Ottomans his successors did not fare so well. The Ottomans and Uzbeks renewed heir attacks on the Safavid state, re-conquering territories in Mesopotamia and Afghanistan, respectively. New threats also emerged: The Duchy of Moscow was growing from an important Duchy far north of Persia into the great Russian Empire, and took territories to the North of Persia, poised to move south into the Empire itself. These threats ultimately distracted the Shahs and drained important human and material resources away from internal development: the Ottomans would soon face the Russian threat directly, and tribal wars in Afghanistan prevented the Uzbeks and their successors from invading deeply into Persia. The Russo-Persian wars (1722-1723) under Czar Peter the Great resulted in a loss of territory in the Caucuses region and the loss of tens of thousands of soldiers. But it was growing European commercial incursion by the Dutch east India Company and then the British East India Company that posed a more significant long-term threat by effectively isolating Persia from overseas trade and income. By the time of Shah Abbas II (r. 1642-1666) the royal court had become isolated and comparatively impoverished, and some provinces were under-populated as the result of putting down uprisings. Abbas was a serious ruler, but affairs were moving beyond the control of the Shah.

Following a series of costly wars with the Ottomans and the Russians in the early 18th century, a new ruler took control of Persia: Nadir Shah (r. 1736-1747) and participated in the collapse of the Safavid Empire. Nadir was neither Persian nor a Safavid Shah. He was likely a member of a tribe of Turkish peoples known as the Oghuz, and was born near the Boundaries of Central Asia, near modern Azerbijan. Originally Nadir had been loyal to the Safavid Shahs and helped defeat the Ottomans in Baghdad (by 1735) But in 1736, in light of Safavid weakness and decline, Nadir called a grand council in the tradition of Ghengiz Khan and Tamerlane to consider

his appointment as Shah of all Persia. Whether due to his prestige in victory or to fear of his retaliation, the council appointed him Shah in 1736.

Nadir soon began a policy of expansion, invading the Mughal Empire (see below) in 1738, Taking the portal city of Kandahar in modern Afghanistan, Nadir eventually defeated the Mughals in 1739, entering into Delhi in the same year. Defeated, the the Mughals were forced to surrender the legendary Peacock Throne—which became the symbol of Persian rule—and the famous Koh-iNoor and Darya-ye Noor diamonds. The Koh-i Noor (uncut weighing 793 carats) is now part of the British Crown Jewels (Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, had the diamond recut in 1852 to improve its appearance, reducing its size from 186 carats to its present 105.6 carats). Nadir did not stop there, but removed treasure totaling 87.5 million British pounds, valued today at 12.5 billion pounds (nearly 18 billion US dollars in 2016). In celebration, Nadir cancelled taxes on his subjects for three years.

Although Nadir is ranked as one of the great world conquerors, he was not statesman. He persisted in the ruse of continuing the Safavid line although he had terminated it in 1736. Upon nadir's death, his son, Adil Shah, ruled for a single year before his assassination, leading to a struggle over succession and civil war, and the breakup of the Safavid territories into smaller kingdoms and prvoinces. Ironically, a leading family of one of the Qizilbash tribes, the Qajar Tribe, would re-establish rule over much of the Safavid Territory, creating the Empire of Qajar Iran (1729-1905).

Islamic Empires of India

Interactions between Islam and South Asia began in the seventh century in connection with the eastward expansion of the Islamic Empire (See chapter ___). The political history of stable Islamic governance in the region begins, however, with a series of ruling groups and dynasties collectively known as the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) and ends with the Mughal Dynasty (1526-1857). Islamic India, as a political state, consequently extended over several centuries from 1206-1857—a considerable stretch of time that allowed for deep cultural, religious, and artistic penetration into the same lands that had already produced some of the world's greatest religious and cultural movements and influences: Hinduism and Buddhism. The cultural, linguistic, religious, literary and artistic achievements of Islamic India rank, nevertheless, with similar achievements of the previous and subsequent states and religions of South Asia, and continue to exert a strong global influence worthy of our special attention and study. This organization of this section reflects the dominance of these two periods of Islamic governance in South Asia, namely. The Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Dynasty.

The Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526)

The Delhi Sultanate comprised a series of ruling groups whose center of power was located in the city of Delhi, located in what is now the Republic of India. South Asia is a large geographical region comprising modern Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, as well as the Republic of India. From the capital in Delhi five important governing groups controlled the northern half of South Asia:

- 1206-1290—Mamluks
- 1290-1330—Khilij Dynasty
- 1330-1414—Tughluq Dynasty
- 1414-1451—Sayyid Dynasty
- 1451-1526—Lodi Dynasty

Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 998-1030)

Before discussion the Delhi Sultanate itself, we should review important precursor states and rulers. Although a more permanent Islamic rule over the greater portion of South Asia would not established for nearly two centuries, the Ghaznavid Dynasty founded by Mahmud of Ghazna established a limited but sustained control over the regions of modern Pakistan west of the Indus River as well as the important area of Lahore in the north. Mahmud was victorious over a collection of armies known as the Indian Confederation. Led by Raja Jayapala (r. 969-1001, Hindu ruler of the Punjab region of India/Pakistan, was Indian Confederation was defeated, and Jayapala was captured. The humiliation of defeat and capture was so deep that Jayapala committed ritual suicide through self-immolation: he set himself on fire.

Mahmud took a vow to collect war reparations for the Battle of Peshawar from the rest of the Indian Confederation members. Thereafter, from a base of operations west of the Indus, Mahmud annual military incursions eastward into Hindu-governed regions of India beginning in the late tenth century. Between 996 CE and 1030 he conducted a series of no less than seventeen military incursions into South Asia. In effect, Mahmud was metaphorically using South Asia as a bank, a source of steady revenue, making regular—even annual in many cases— "withdrawals." Mahmud and his successors thereby weakened resistance in northern India, paving the way for the subsequent invasions made by Sultan Qutb al-Din Aybak (r. 1206-1210)—the founders of the Delhi Sultanate.

In conclusion, although Mahmud is often portrayed as a jihadi—motivated by religious zeal, his actions have led to a reassessment by many historians. The *jizya* tax was not imposed upon non-Muslim subjects during his reign, non-Muslim warriors served in his armies under their own commanders and with the own flags, and there was no forced conversions to Islam, Mahmud is considered to have been motivated mostly by zeal for wealth and power, and by the expansion of his state.

Highlights of the Delhi Sultanate

The Sultanate was founded and governed mostly by Turkish peoples from Central Asia who had converted to Islam. In fact, four of the five ruling groups of the Sultanate were Turkish. Like many invaders of South Asia, Afghanistan offered the best military access to the subcontinent beginning from the area of Kabul (modern Afghanistan) and thereafter by means of the ancient "Silk Road" trail through the Khyber Pass located in the Hindu Kush mountains. A Sultan named Mu'izz al-Din Muhammad—Sultan of the Ghurid Empire located in Eastern Persia and Afghanistan—invaded northern India through the Khyber Pass, conquering Delhi in 1193. Mu'izz returned to his capital in Persia, leaving the area of Delhi under the command of Qutb al-Din Aybak. Following the assassination of Mu'izz in 1206, Qutb al-Din became Sultan of Delhi and founded the Delhi Sultanate.

The Mamluks. The Arabic word "Mamluk" means "owned men," or "slaves." The Mamluks of Delhi descended from slaves purchased and enrolled in the armies of various empires in the region. Although Mamluk slaves came from many ethnic backgrounds, most were

Turks. Several states and empires employed Mamluk armies in the thirteenth century, and some were able to break free from their masters and form their own governments. The two most important Mamluk states were centered in Egypt (1250-1517, defeated by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I) and in Delhi. This section focuses on the Mamluks of Delhi. Confusion between the two Mamluk states is common, and the reader should exercise care to keep them separate in the historical narrative.

Upon the death of Mu'izz in 1206 Qutb al-Din quickly secured his manumission (freedom) and established his own sultanate with Delhi as the capital. Qutb al-Din extended the territory of the Sultanate through conquest in an East-West axis along the Ganges and Yamuna river valleys. Following the death of Qutb al-Din in 1210, his eventual successor, Sultan Iltumish (1211-36) extended and consolidated previous conquests, establishing an Empire stretching eastward from the upper Indus Valley (north Pakistan) to the flood plains of the Ganges River in Bengal (modern Bangladesh). Iltumish completed the architectural projects begun by Qutb al-Din, most notably the massive mosque complex called *Quwwati al-Islam* ("Strength of Islam," see below, located in southern parts of modern New Delhi, as well as initiating his own projects. Iltumish reformed the administration of the Delhi government, introduced new coinage, and established the *Iqta* (or *Iqtadar*) system of military service (similar to the Ottoman *Iqta* system, and to the feudal use of fiefs to finance military service upon oaths of loyalty used in parts of Western Europe). Perhaps most significantly, Iltumish repulsed the attempted invasion of South Asia by Genghiz Khan in 1221.

The Mamluks of Delhi scored an historical first when Razia al-Din (r. 1236-1240, grand-daughter of Qutb al-Din) became *Sultana*, the first Muslim woman to rule in South Asia, and the first female Muslim to govern an extensive sultanate. A favorite of Qutb al-Din, Razia grew up in the palace harem in Delhi under the watchful eye of her mother, and was present during the conduct of affairs of state during her youth (in contrast to her many brothers and half-brothers, who were raised in various located scattered throughout the Sultanate). Razia chose not to wear the customary veil, and adopted male dress and behavior, considered scandalous by member of the court. Consequently, a conspiracy formed leading to her downfall. But this did not stop her ambition. She attempted to lead an army to Delhi are reclaim the throne, but was defeated. Her forces abandoned her and she fled westward with her husband, but was captured, tortured, and killed in 1241.

The Tughluq Dynasty (1330-1414). Muhammad bin Tughluq (r. 1324-51) murdered his father and claimed the throne. Thereafter he rapidly expanded the territory of the Sultanate southward between 1330 and 1335, claiming nearly eighty percent of the subcontinent. His success was, nevertheless, short lived. According to the court historian, Zia al-Din Barni, taxes were lessened on Muslims but increased significantly on non-Muslims—mostly Hindus—and torture became a tool of state. Barni noted that the taxation was so onerous that the houses of prominent Hindus were metaphorically transformed into government mints. The Sultan also persecuted certain elements within Islam, notably attacking and killing Shi'ites and Sufis, leading Barni to comment that not a week passed during Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign without the shedding of much Muslim blood. These policies and actions naturally led to rebellion, with the loss of territory in the south and a few other areas of the Sultanate. In response, the Sultan began a program of execution that shocked the famous Muslim historian and geographer Ibn Battuta (1304-1369):

> "Not a week passed without the spilling of much Muslim blood and the running of streams of gore before the entrance of his palace. This included cutting people in half, skinning them alive, chopping off heads and displaying them on poles as a warning to others, or having prisoners tossed about by elephants with swords attached to their tusks."

Although the rebellions and wars fought under Muhammad ibn Tughluq threatened the sultanate, the nadir of Tughluq rule came in 1398 when the sultanate was nearly destroyed by Timur the Lame (Tamerlane): Delhi was sacked and looted for eight days before order was eventually restored.

The Mughal Dynasty (1526-1857)

Babur (r. 1526-1530), born Zahir al-Din Muhammad, was the founder and first Emperor of the Mughal Dynasty. An ethnic Turco-Mongolian and descendent of both Genghiz Khan and Timur (Tamerlane) through his mother, Babur invaded South Asia from Afghanistan, and overthrew Ibrahim Lodi (r. 1517-1526), the last Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate at the First Battle of Panipat (April 1526), perhaps the first major military engagement in South Asia employing gunpowder technologies (firearms and field artillery) on a large scale. The conquest of the last Sultan of Delhi in 1526 was followed by the defeat of a confederacy of Hindu princes led by Rana Sangha of Mewar (r. 1508-1528) at the Battle of Khanwa (1527), removed immediate military threats to the nascent dynasty in the regions of central India. Having established a territorial foothold in northern India, his Mughal successors created the second largest empire in South Asia (the Mauryan Empire, 322-185 BCE, was the largest territorially). The Mughal Empire, in general, governed much of South Asia through administrative practice and reform balanced with a comparatively high degree of local autonomy in more rural districts and areas. The Empire's interfaith relations were mixed, with Akbar the Great intentionally creating an environment of active inter-religious conviviality and tolerance, followed by a time of firm Islamic domination under Aurangzeb.

The Mughal Empire was thereafter governed into the eighteenth century by several capable emperors, most notably Humayun (1530-40, and 1555-1556), Akbar The Great (r. 1556-1605), Shah Jehan (r. 1627-1658), and Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707). Beginning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries several European interests in India competed for control of the subcontinent, forming the most serious threat to the Mughal Dynasty. These included the Portuguese State in India (founded following the discovery of the Malabar Coast by Vasco da Gama in 1498) and the British East India Company (BEIC, 1600-1874). Ultimately, a series of rebellions in the 1850s fatally weakened both the Mughal Empire and the BEIC, culminating in the creation of the British Raj (1858-1947), which ruled South Asia as a formal part of the British Empire until the independence of Pakistan and India in the 1940s led by Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Muhammad Jinnah (among others) following World War Two.

The history of the Mughal Empire may be divided into periods as follows:

- 1526-1556: Establishment of the Mughal Empire

- 1556-1707: Golden Age
- 1707-1857: Decline

Establishment of the Mughal Empire (1526-1556)

The reign of Humayun attempted to solidify the initial conquests of Babur between 1530 and 1540, and following a period of instability known as the Puri Interregnum, succeeded in pacifying the most significant threats for to the continued existence of the Empire.

1530-40 and the Puri Interregnum (to 1555). This period of Mughal history can be confusing due to the interruption of Humayun's rule and governance of his former territories under several intervening rulers. Nevertheless, if understood as an "interregnum"—a politically and militarily turbulent time between kingdoms divided into three sub-parts, the period becomes more intelligible:

- 1530-1539: conquest of Gujarat
- 1539-1545: defeat by Puri, and escape to Persia
- 1545-1555: re-conquest and consolidation

Humayun was comparatively young and inexperienced when the came to the throne at the age of 23. The Empire itself was only four years old when Babur died. Furthermore, the decision of his father (Babur) to divide the Empire between his sons left Humayun in a rather insecure position. Humayun faced two significant military threats, both of which may have been effectively resoled under better conditions. The first threat came from the southwest in the region of Gujarat. In 1535 Humayun successfully subdued Gujarat, consolidating his gains through the capture of the important forts of Mandu and Champaner in that same year.

He then turned his attention to a second and more potent threat from the eastern regions of Ganges Plain centered in Patna and led by Sher Shah Suri (r. Mughal Empire from 1540-1545). A former commander of Mughal forces under Babur, Sher Shah Suri defeated the armies of Humayun at the Battle of Chausa (1539). Humayun fled South Asia and took refuge in Isfahan (modern Iran) under the protection the Safavid Emperor Tahmasp I. Using cavalry and other military forces provided him by Tahmasp, Humayaun began the reconquest of the Mughal territories with a victory over the forces of his brother, Kamran Mirza, in Kandahar in 1545. Following the death of Sher Shah Suri in 1545, the way was open for the re-conquest of South Asia.

The subsequent death of Sher Shah Suri's son and heir, Islam Shah (r. 1545-1554) ended the Puri Interregnum, and Humayun retook the capital of Delhi in 1555. Humayun, carrying an armful of books down a staircase in his palace, fell and died three days later in 1556, and was eventually buried in a large and elaborate tomb located south of Delhi. Known simply as Humayun's tomb, the structure was completed in 1586 and later became an important architectural inspiration for the famed Taj Mahal.

Golden Age (1555-1707)

The Mughal Empire entered a so-called "golden age" under the lengthy rule of four important Emperors: Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jehan, and Aurangzeb.

Akbar the Great (r. 1542-1605). Akbar's name reflects the significance of his rule to the success of the Mughal Dynasty: "Akbar al-Azam" literally means "Great One the Great." Akbar

influenced the course of the Empire as well as the culture and society of India for centuries to come. The Emperor's numerous achievements and notable activities included:

- *Military activity and reforms*. Akbar succeeded in conquering more than half of the Indian subcontinent. Much of this was accomplished through the effective use of firearms and artillery. Akbar imported guns and cannon from the Ottoman Empire as well as from Portuguese and Italian sellers. Akbar campaigned in Central Asia, too, securing governance and control of Kabul and Kandahar in modern Afghanistan, and thus controlled military access to South Asia.
- *Taxation*. The efficient collection of taxes was necessary to operate a complex military organization based upon the use of gunpowder and the more expensive gunpowder weapons. Akbar experimented with tax rates and collection systems, particularly with respect to agricultural lands. He eventually settled on a system of fixing tax rates on agricultural land at one-third of the land's production over the past ten years. Local minor nobles, called Zamindars, collected taxes at the village level. Zamindars were also responsible to inspect lands, and provide loans and tools in time of need. In turn, Zamindars received a portion of the produce as compensation. Peasants retained a hereditary right to cultivate their land so long as taxes were paid.
- *Capital*. Akbar built a new capital city south of Delhi, near Agra, named Fatehpur Sikri. It is thought that the new capital was built to give Akbar close access to an important Sufi Saint, Salim Chishty. Akbar had been without a son, and consulted Salim Chishty, who prayed for the Emperor: soon three sons were born, and Emperor's devotion to the Saint grew. The new capital included administrative buildings, palaces for each queen (including one styled in Hindu fashion for a Hindu queen. The palace complex included a private audience hall, known as the Diwan-i Khas, and a large artificial lake. The Palace complex was soon abandoned, perhaps because it was rather distant from urban areas and other centers of power and commerce, or because of an insufficient water supply. The palace complex included a massive mosque, a Jami Masjid, which includes the white marble *Dargah*, or tomb, of Salim Chishty, a fine example of Mughal architecture and an important pilgrimage spot to this day.
- *Marriage alliances*. Akbar used marriage as an important way of handling relations with other states and rulers. Perhaps the most famous marriage was to Princess Jodha Bai, the daughter of a local Rajput (Hindu ruler), who he provided with a palace equipped for Hindu worship. Jodha Bai was the mother of Emperor Jehangir, the grand-mother of Emperor Shah Jehan, and the great-grand-mother of Emperor Aurangzeb.
- *Religious tolerance*. Akbar's reign was a period of improved interfaith relations, particularly between Muslims and Hindus. Improved relations were in large part the product of his inter-faith marriages and the Sufi influence of Salim Chishty. In 1568, the Emperor repealed the jizya tax on non-Muslims. Akbar's interest in theology grew, and he sponsored discussions on religious tolerance at Fatehpur Sikri in the Ibadat Khana (Center for Worship), a special interfaith building located within the palace complex, completed in 1575. In addition to fostering interfaith dialogue and discussion, Akbar proclaimed new laws, decreeing that Hindus who had converted to Islam could reconvert and return to Hinduism if they so chose. The Emperor occasionally celebrated certain Hindu religious festivals and customs, such as *Diwali*—the festival of lights—and had personally renounced eating beef. Akbar may have gone too far in the sight of fellow Muslims and his religious advisors in formulating a syncretic theology called *din-i-llahi*

(the Religion of Allah), which had no official scripture or priests, downplayed ritual and custom, and promoted a universalist ethical system prohibiting sensuality, pride, slander, and lust—considered sins—while advancing core virtues such as kindness and piety. Perhaps Akbar intended to merely provide a basis for mutual interfaith respect and some measure of unity, but toward the end of his reign a growing number of Muslim theologians felt that the Emperor had attempted to create a new faith, supplanting Islam with a false substitute.

When Akbar died in 1605 he left a lasting legacy of pluralism and tolerance in South Asia, and some go so far as to credit the Emperor with establishing a sense of "India" among the inhabitants of the sub-continent. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902—a Hindu nationalist, philosopher, and holy man credited with helping to bring Hindu faith and custom to western awareness—was known to praise Akbar the Great's contributions to India in general, quoting the poem:

> Seated on the throne, a god amongst men,
> Thou, the Emperor of Delhi.
> Blessed was the hour, the minute, the second,
> When thou ascendest the throne,
> O God amongst men,
> Thou, the Lord of Delhi.

His name appears in modern lists of the most important world rulers throughout history, many citing the Emperor's achievements in formulating the pluralistic values found (or so it is claimed) in the modern Republic of India. This is perhaps an overstatement, but Akbar's influence is recognized and credits by person of many religious traditions in India.

Shah Jehan (r. 1628-1658, d. 1666). Jehangir, the fourth Mughal Emperor and son of Akbar the great ruled from 1605-1628, followed by Shah Jehan, his son who won the Mughal throne following a bloody civil war between Jehangir's sons. Whereas Jehangir followed many of the policies and principles of Akbar the Great in administration and in religious tolerance, shah Jehan did not. Unlike Akbar, and to a lesser extent, Jehangir, Shah Jehan was not known for his military exploits, or interfaith tolerance (he persecuted non-Muslims, especially Hindus, and made no great conquests). Instead his legacy rests principally in art and architecture.

Shah Jehan had one of the most famous thrones in history built for him, the famed Peacock Throne. Composed largely of gold and named for the gold peacocks that adorned it, the throne included some of the most famous gems in history: the Koh-i-Noor diamond (186 carats), the Akbar Shah diamond (95 carats), the Shah Diamond (88 carats), the Jahangir Diamond (83 carats), and the Timur Ruby (352 carats). The gems were arranged in four main horizontal bars, with twelve columns, with a red silk canopy woven with gems and pearls. This legendary piece of art remains just that: legendary. Although descriptions of the Peacock Throne remain, the throne itself is gone. Following the conquest of Delhi by Nadir Shah (see above), the throne was taken out of Delhi, and either dismembered or lost entirely: there are several different stories of its demise. Several later dynasties claimed to have the throne (the Ottomans, for example), or claimed the right to possess it (the Pahlavi Shahs of Iran).

Shah Jehan's architectural works include the Red Fort in Delhi and other monumental structures, but none surpass the Taj Mahal. Often mistaken for a mosque, the Taj is a tomb. The love story behind the tombs construction is almost as legendary as the building itself. AS was common with Emperors, Shah Jehan had several wives, but none more beloved than his second wife, Mumtaz Mahal (meaning "Elect Lady of the Palace"). A remarkable woman of culture, learning, and beauty, Mumtaz Mahal held Jehan's heart captive it was said. Betrothed to Shah Jehan in 1607 when she was thirteen and he was 15, they married five years later in 1612. Jehan had previously married in 1609 and took a third wife in 1617, but his attentions seemed focused almost exclusively upon Mumtaz. Jehan—as royal duty required—fathered one child with each of the other two wives, but had a remarkable fourteen children with Mumtaz. Although pregnant much of the time, she travelled with Jehan throughout the empire, was a trusted advisor and confidant, and was given jewels and preference far above the other wives. Needless to say, court poets hymned praises to the famed eroticism of the couple and their renowned intimacy. Mumtaz died while giving birth to their fourteenth child in nineteen years. Stricken with grief, Shah Jehan determined to build the most magnificent of tombs to honor her. Mumtaz was eventually buried in thd white marble tomb in the center of the building. Although Shah Jehan was later violently deposed by his son Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) and imprisoned in the nearby Agra Fort until his death, Aurangzeb eventually buried his father beside Mumtaz under the dome of the Taj Mahal.

An authoritarian ruler determined to expand and strengthen the Mughal Empire, Aurangzeb became instead the last effective Mughal ruler. He met his match, but not from within India. Instead, the British East India Company grew in power on the subcontinent until the remaining Mughal emperors gave up the throne in 1857, marking the beginning of the British Raj and the end of Islamic India (see Chapter 8).

Conclusion

The Islamic Empire of the Gunpowder Era—the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals—collectively represent the Islamic world at the height of its imperial power. From North Africa, across south-central Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent the rulers of these dynasties exercised almost unchallenged power from the fifteenth to the eighteen centuries. Viewed as a political and civilizational golden age, many Muslims today recall to heady times when they were masters of the world.

Part VI

Africa and the Americas

CHAPTER 18

Africa to 1885

"I teach kings the history of their ancestors, so that the lives of the ancients may serve them as an example, for the world is old, but the future springs from the past."

--D. T. Niane, *Sundiata, An Epic of Old Mali*, p.1

Introduction

Until recent decades, few historians devoted their attention to the study of African history. Part of this was due to the Eurocentric emphasis of the historical profession and, in some cases, to the racial and other biases of individual historians. Finding little or nothing that they could recognize as civilization—the West providing the template for such—most historians concluded that Africa offered historians nothing worth studying. In the early 1960s, Oxford professor Hugh Trevor-Roper (1914-2003) even went so far as to state that Africa had no history: "there is only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness." For him, the study of Africa offered nothing more than "the unedifying gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe."

While few would now agree that Africa has no history or that it is irrelevant, there are other reasons that the study of African history has been neglected, at least relative to the history of other areas of world. Aside from a basic lack of familiarity with Africa that most Westerners share (our problem, not Africa's), there are two other obstacles that make studying African history difficult, at least before relatively recent times. These obstacles include 1) the geography of the African continent and 2) a paucity of the kinds of sources that historians traditionally employ to research and write history. Both of these problems must be confronted and understood before one explores African history.

The Geography of Africa

Africa is the second-largest continent on earth. It occupies 20% of the earth's landmass and, at 30.3 million square kilometers in size, is almost 6 million square kilometers larger than North America and almost exactly three times the size of Europe. It is also the second largest continent in population with nearly double the population of North America, though of course it was not always so populated. The geography is, moreover, incredibly diverse: from the largest desert in the world—the Sahara—in the north, to the rainforest of the west-central region, to the Great Rift Valley, massive mountains, and Serengeti Plain of the east, to the high, arid plateau of the south. Waterways like the Nile and Niger have enabled long-distance trade, while the swift currents, frequent cataracts, and imposing surrounding terrain of the Congo and Zambezi have hindered human contact over distance.

Apart from the physical features, other elements of the geography have had a profound impact on human existence in Africa. Naturally, the availability of rainfall has been a major factor in determining the social and cultural structures of various African peoples. Agriculture has only been possible in regions that receive at least twenty centimeters of rainfall; those in regions that receive less have relied on pastoralism or, in some cases, hunting and gathering.

Diseases have also had a major impact. As the carrier of African sleeping sickness, the tsetse fly has made certain economic modes--the raising of cattle and horses in particular--impossible. Without beasts of burden, plow agriculture and long-distance trade were nearly impossible in large regions of Africa until recent times. In rain forest and subtropical regions, mosquitoes carrying malaria and other diseases have challenged human societies for millennia. Vegetation has also played a major role in determining the type of human societies that have developed in various regions of Africa: some areas have been dependent on vine crops (especially yams), while others have developed grain agriculture. Still others have exploited the palm or baobab trees to produce foodstuffs and other products ranging from fruits to oils to alcoholic drinks.

Cultural and Human Diversity

As should be apparent, the geographic diversity of Africa is matched by a corresponding amount of diversity in human communities. With their link to the Mediterranean, Egypt and North Africa have been fundamental components of land-based empires over several millennia: from the Hellenistic and Roman empires of the ancient world to the Abbasid and Ottoman empires of the medieval and early modern eras. The arid Sahel to the south of the Sahara and the regions surrounding the Great Rift Valley have been home to significant kingdoms and regional empires: Kush, Aksum, and Meröe in the Ethiopian highlands, Buganda and Bunyoro in the Great Lakes Region, and Ghana, Mali, and Songhay in West Africa, to name just a few. The rainforests of west and central Africa have housed diverse peoples in localized microstates like Ife and Benin and in non-hegemonic political entities, some of them relatively egalitarian. In the east, Arab merchants founded trading centers like Zanzibar, Mogadishu, Kilwa, and Mombasa, trading with the Bantu migrants who brought agriculture, iron technology and cattle-raising to the interior of eastern and southern Africa, pushing the original *Khoisan* peoples into the forbidding sands of the Kalahari Desert. All of this is to say that one cannot possibly hope to study African history or African societies as a whole, even if the continent resides as a dark, wild, primitive unity in the western imagination. Each region has its own unique history, its own economy, and its own unique social and cultural forms.

In addition to fostering incredible diversity, the geography of Africa poses other challenges to the study of African history. The vastness of Africa has meant that human societies have spread out, with individuals and even entire communities moving frequently. As will be discussed below, migration is an important theme in African history. With the impermanence of societies, record-keeping in any kind of permanent form (written, inscribed, etc.) has been rare. In addition, the foreboding geographical and climatic conditions of several regions of the continent--whether sandstorms in the Sahara region or invasive vegetation in the rain forests--have made preservation of the human record, archaeological remains in particular, difficult.

Scarcity of sources

From at least the time of Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), the father of the modern historical profession, historians have adhered to the principle that history is to be found, interpreted, and recounted using written documents preserved in archives. Due partly to the geography, partly to the potency of oral tradition in many African societies, and partly to other factors, African societies have produced few written records and still fewer archives for preserving them. Of course, there are exceptions—the societies of the Mediterranean region and the kingdoms of Ethiopia serving as the most prevalent examples—but most societies in Africa have no tradition of written record-keeping. Historians must look to other types of evidence to

investigate all but the most recent periods of African history, and this daunting proposition has tended to discourage scholars from even making the attempt.

The problem of the dearth of written sources is compounded by the relative scarcity of archaeological material in much of Africa. While a few regions of Africa--the Mediterranean coast and the Nile Valley, for instance--have rich material records, and while the pyramids of Egypt, the monolithic churches of medieval Ethiopia, the mosques of Sahelian West Africa, and the imposing walls of Great Zimbabwe constitute some of the richest examples of architecture ever constructed by human hands, most regions of Africa have left behind few material remains. The continent's abundance of available land for a relatively small population ravaged by disease, harsh climate, slave traders, and endemic warfare produced a historical situation wherein Africans migrated constantly, seeking new, fertile lands and new opportunities away from environmental dangers and human predations. African peoples of most regions of the continent thus constructed impermanent dwellings and other structures out of degradable materials like wood and animal skins. While African peoples did fashion agricultural implements, weapons, and other tools out of harder stuff—stone in the earliest periods and then iron and copper by at least the early first millennium CE—they valued such items very highly and thus tended to carry them with them on their frequent migrations. Scholars of African history can thus employ archaeological evidence in their explorations, but such evidence often must be corroborated with other types of sources.

Historians of pre-modern Africa have employed two major types of evidence--in conjunction with archaeological material and written sources if such are available--to tell the continent's story. First, they have drawn upon oral tradition, often through interviews with traditional authorities in local settings. While such source material may sound suspect—and indeed the probability of corruption and accretion must be accounted for when using oral sources—many African societies take great pains to preserve their traditions orally. Indeed, many African societies have featured respected, professional lorekeepers. The *griots* of West Africa, for example, were the official storytellers, spokesmen, and advisors of kings, nobles, and other great men, and their jobs included both mastering the histories of their people and giving public performances of their memorized material, often to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Even traditional healers in some part of Africa, the *sangomas* of Southern Africa for instance, acted as lorekeepers and storytellers, in addition to performing their medicinal and religious roles. This material constitutes a rich collection of historical evidence, though historians must confront it with the right kinds of questions and with sound methodology. Such material probably does not provide a reliable record of strict chronology or other trivial aspects of African history, yet it does potentially reveal a great deal about the values, cultural assumptions, and intellectual processes of past peoples. If it can be corroborated with material remains or other substantive source material, oral tradition can be a powerful repository of historical data.

The second type of evidence employed by historians of Africa in recent years is linguistic. Africa has a diverse mix of languages that may be categorized broadly into five distinct language families and into a larger number of sub-families, among them the Bantu languages that predominate south of equatorial Africa. Languages are not static, especially in the absence of a writing system that tends to solidify a language's grammar, syntax, and vocabulary; they change and develop over time as the peoples who speak those languages encounter new situations and thus develop new vocabularies. Languages thus contain historical information about the peoples who speak them. Scholars in recent years have assembled linguistic information from sets of related languages and, using this data, have constructed so-called

"proto-languages," theoretically the base vocabularies of the languages before they began branching from the original tongue. By then comparing this "proto-language" to the languages that branched from it, they have been able to plot out important historical circumstances that affected the development of those languages. For instance, some Bantu languages have complex vocabularies for metals or cattle, while others lack words describing these things. We can assume that, at some point, the societies who spoke the languages with these vocabularies came to rely heavily on the use of metals like iron, on cattle, or on other items and concepts that appear in these languages with regularity. Having assembled large data sets of this linguistic evidence, these scholars have then been able to narrate, admittedly in a somewhat speculative vein, the histories of the speakers of these language groups. In the absence of more traditional historical sources, linguistics have thus provided rich data for creative historians.

Africa and Human Prehistory

Any academic discussion of the distant past, particularly pre-history and human origins, presents several source-related challenges. By "human" we mean any member of the genus *Homo*, not just *Homo sapiens* (modern humans, or "us"). Several criteria are used to define a species' inclusion in the genus *Homo*. For example, humans are bipedal: we all share an ability to walk upright on two feet without the use of hands for all or most of the time, and possess the skeletal/muscular structures necessary for bi-pedalism, The manufacture of tools is considered another defining hallmark of humans. In other words, humans are bipedal tool-makers. The first humans appeared in the African historical/geological record over 2.4 MYA (Million Years Ago), with the advent of a creature known as *Homo habilis* (literally "Handy man," referring to tool-making capacities), followed at about 2MYA by one the most enduring and successful human species, H. erectus ("Upright, or bipedal, Man"), a species that spread across much of Africa, Asia, and parts of Europe from about 1.9 MYA to 70 KYA (Thousand Years Ago).

There are in some cases very few sources available for examination (as is the case with the distant past in almost every region or area of the world). There are no written sources, since writing that we can understand and use as historians was invented only about 5,000 years ago. Remaining sources directly related to genus *Homo* are divided into the broad categories of 1) *artifacts*, meaning anything made or fashioned by humans–including stone tools, dwellings, graves, or other structures; 2) *ecofacts*, which include middens (waste/garbage piles) and/or animal or plant remains used by humans (but not as artifacts, such as the bones of an animal left after eating the flesh); 3) *biofacts*, such as the DNA that can be salvaged from human species living over the past forty-thousand years or so; and 4) *fossils*, minerals that have taken the shape of biological structures such as the skull and other bones, and in rare cases, the impressions left by soft tissues. In some cases, we have entire skeletons, villages, graves, or structures to provide fairly detailed evidence of humans and their activities. In other cases, we may have only a fossil fragment to go on.

In addition to sources and evidence related directly to human activity, there are contextual sources used to date where and when the different human species lived. These sources include, for example, *stratigraphy*: the study of layers of earth laid one upon another above a particular fossil or other discovery. Scientists, including paleo-anthropologists for example, use comparisons between modern hunter-gatherers and prehistoric sources to estimate human behavior and social organization, the assumption being that the basic techniques of hunter-gathering require similar behaviors among hunter-gather groups, no matter when they lived. Climatology is very important to understanding human pre-history, since human behavior and

evolution is often tied to climatological change and adaptation to that change. These efforts to understand human origins in Africa have produced an overarching narrative, which can be broadly summarized as follows:

4 MYA: The species *Australopithecus afarensis*, a species that resembled humans in that it was bipedal but not a tool-maker, flourished in the Rift Valley area in eastern Africa. Perhaps the most famous of all Australopithecene fossil remains are those of a female named "Lucy" (3.2 MYA) by modern paleontologists, found in the region of Hadar in modern Ethiopia. The shape of the hips, the femur, and the knees indicate at least a partial bipedal ability, although the structures of wrists and hands indicate the ability to "knuckle-walk"–like Chimpanzees–as well.

2.1 MYA: Remains of the earliest member of the species of the genus *Homo* (*H. habilis*, or Handy Man) were discovered in the Olduvai Gorge, located in the Rift Valley region of east Africa. Known as Specimen OH-7, the fossils were associated with what is called the Oldowan Lithic Industry, considered to be the earliest widespread prehistoric stone tool industry. Because larger brains are associated with the ability to make and use tools, the "cranial capacity"–the size of the skull space occupied by the brain–of the various species of genus Homo are compared, assuming that the mastery of tool-making requires additional neurons. Cranial capacity of differing species of Homo become of increasing interest as scholars trace the ways the human "tool-box" expanded and diversified with the addition of the mastery of fire, cooking, language, and art, all of which appeared later in the prehistoric record. In terms of comparison, Lucy's cranial capacity is estimated at 491.2 cm^3 and *H. habilis* at 610.3 cm^3.

1.9 MYA: *H. erectus* (upright man) is one of the most successful species of the genus Homo, having lived as a species from about 1.9 MYA to 70 KYA. This species is widely considered to have descended in Africa from the Australopithicenes, like *H. habilis*. This species has long been associated with the "First Out of Africa" theory, meaning that *H habilis* spread from Africa into Europe and Asia. H. Habilis had a cranial capacity of 1092.9 cm^3 and is associated with the more-sophisticated Achulean tool industry, the mastery of fire (about 1.4 MYA) and cooking (500 KYA), and the first hunter-gatherer societies, evidencing more advanced decision-making and social cooperation than previous species.

350 KYA: *H. Neanderthalensis*, or Neanderthals, were a species of humans likely descended and evolved from H. erectus, having left Africa about 1.9 MYA in the First out of Africa migration. They became a separate species in Europe sometime between 600 and 350 KYA. They went extinct very recently (in terms of geological or evolutionary timescales), about 40 KYA. There is strong evidence that Neanderthals and modern humans (*Homo sapiens*, or "us") coexisted for a significant time, about 150 thousand years. Neanderthals had a cranial capacity of 1,427.2 cm^3, almost as large as modern humans. Neanderthals produced jewelry such as beads, and were known to bury their dead. Reasons given for the extinction of Neanderthals include large-scale conflict between Neanderthals and modern humans, interbreeding between Neanderthals and modern humans, and an inability to compete with modern humans at collecting food or other required resources. There is no credible evidence of a mass conflict between humans and Neanderthals (such large-scale warfare would have left a great deal of evidence in the form of weapons and bones), and such a conflict would have required a level of social cooperation among members of the opposing armies that does not appear in the human record until about 5

KYA (or about 3000 BCE), long after the Neanderthals went extinct. Interbreeding and the inability to compete with modern humans for resources are considered the most likely extinction scenarios.

200 KYA: Modern humans are classified as either *H. sapiens* (wise man) or *H. sapiens sapiens* (really wise man). Originating in Africa about 200 KYA, modern humans left in the Second Out of Africa migration. The cranial capacity of modern humans (1,4296.5 cm^3) is only slightly larger than that of Neanderthals, so this alone does not account for the comparative success of *H. sapiens* over Neanderthals. Modern humans have other anatomical advantages, such as finer hand and finger structures for detailed work particularly in connection with art and the construction of more sophisticated structures, but perhaps most importantly modern humans have a small bone in the larynx, called the Hyoid bone, which is essential for the development of language beyond hoots and grunts. The ability to build more sophisticated shelters and to evolve a more complex, effective, and flexible social cooperation would have been strong advantages in times of climate stress or food scarcity. Although there is no strong consensus about when modern human languages first appeared, the accepted range is between 60 and 10 KYA, and is restricted to *H. sapiens*. Although there is evidence of human art, the oldest widely-accepted representational art was produced by modern humans and is found in Chauvet Cave, located in modern France, dating back to about 35 KYA. Early evidence of villages constructed by modern humans includes the Ohalos II structures in modern Israel, dating to about 19 KYA. In terms of interbreeding of modern humans and Neanderthals, the two species share about 99.7 percent of their DNA. In fact, between 2 to 5% of the DNA in modern humans today is Neanderthal DNA, demonstrating a very strong probability of interbreeding.

Human Evolution is the most scientifically-supported explanation for the emergence of genus Homo in Africa: about 10MYA humans shared a Last Common Ancestor, of "LCA," with genus Panin (to which Chimpanzees and Bonobos belong), and a subsequently LCA about 4 MYA with genus *Australopithecus*, and then evolved into genus *Homo*. There is DNA evidence suggesting a strong relationship between Chimpanzees and modern humans, since they are closely related, sharing 98.8% of DNA with Chimps, our closest living relative in terms of shared DNA.

At one time it was believed that there was a direct, or lineal "Descent of Man" from one species of genus *Homo* to another: from *H. habilis*, to *H. erectus*, and so on to *H sapiens*. Instead, It now appears that modern humans evolved from a number of possible pre-existing species of genus *Homo* or from a combination of pre-existing species, including, but not limited to, *H. Erectus*. The scientifically-accepted evidence for such an evolutionary path is sizeable and significant, but not conclusive. There are, however, several scientifically debated explanations for human evolution, each drawing upon the same evidence and facts. Nevertheless, although complete consensus on the evolutionary origins of humans has not been achieved among scientists, one thing seems clear: we all came out of Africa.

Agriculture, Metallurgy, and Migration

Like peoples in other parts of the world discussed earlier in this text, African peoples participated in the agricultural and pastoral revolutions that reshaped human life in antiquity. Egypt and other parts of north Africa were early agriculturalists, likely the beneficiaries of the diffusion of knowledge from the Fertile Crescent around 5000 BCE. Both euro-centric and afro-

centric historians have argued (though for very different reasons) that agriculture and other marks of civilization diffused from Egypt to other parts of Africa, but more recent evidence indicates that agriculture was most likely developed in other regions independently of Egyptian influence. From around 10,000 BCE to roughly 5500 BCE, African passed through a wet period, when the now-dry Sahara Desert was able to sustain life. During this period, Lake Chad covered a vastly larger area than it does at present (at its height, more than the present-day Caspian Sea), and hunter-gatherers along its shores developed fishing technology. As the rainfall levels dropped and the Sahara began to dry up, these hunter-fishers moved to the southeast, eventually into the region of the Ethiopian highlands. These migrants from Lake Chad developed both agriculture and pastoralism in that area sometime in the first millennium BCE and likely passed this information on to Bantu-speaking peoples migrating around the edges of the central African rain forests. The diffusion of these modes of living was one of the most fruitful transmissions in human history, as Bantu-speakers would eventually migrate throughout sub-Saharan Africa, armed with agricultural and pastoral knowledge.

The Bantu migrations were a millennia-long process of piecemeal movement from one suitable location to another by peoples seeking land for farming or grazing their animals. Bantu is a prolific sub-family of the larger Niger-Congo language group. According to linguistic theory, Niger-Congo languages first emerged in the area now occupied by the country of Cameroon. In the middle of the second millennium BCE, Niger-Congo speakers began to migrate away from this point of origin. Some went west and, over many centuries, settled the rain forests of the west African coasts and the grasslands of the west African Sahel, coming into contact with Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan speakers migrating away from the constantly-drying Sahara region. Other Niger-Congo speakers moved to the south and east; these two groups form the two major branches of the Bantu sub-family of languages. Some Bantu-speakers moved to the south and entered the central African rain forest, eventually forming coherent societies along the Congo River. The Bantus who moved to the east, skirting the northern and eastern edges of the rain forest, came into contact with the Nilo-Saharan and Cushitic peoples who shared with the Bantus their knowledge of farming, herding, and possibly working with metals. Bantu-speakers settled in fairly large numbers in the fertile highlands around the Great Lakes, as the lands of that area were enriched by the soils of the Great Rift Valley. By the second half of the first millennium BCE, Bantus had reached the wide, game-filled plains of east Africa. The last phase of the migrations saw Bantus reach southern Africa (c.500 CE), where they interacted, probably via exchange, intermarriage, and warfare simultaneously, both with western Bantu migrants emerging from the southern boundary of the rain forest and with Khoisan hunter-gatherers who had inhabited southern Africa since Paleolithic times. Some Khoisan mixed with Bantus and took up cattle herding, while others found refuge in the Kalahari Desert and continued their hunting and gathering lifestyle as cohesive groups.

The Bantu migrations appear to be similar to other great migrations over long distances that populate the timelines of human history—the eastward migrations of Russians across Siberia, for instance, or the westward trek of pioneers across the continental United States—but they differ from these more recent happenings in two important respects. First, Bantu peoples did not migrate *en masse* but did so rather as small kinship groups. There was no central authority—and probably no overarching migration ethos—guiding these migrations; small bands moved independently of each under the direction of a group leader as need dictated. Second, these Bantu groups did not cover long distances in a short time. Bantu farmers and herders moved into virgin territory as their farmland or grazing land ceased to produce; it is likely that groups migrated

only a few kilometers at a time—whatever was necessary to locate productive new territory. The underpopulated state of the African continent meant that productive land was readily available for those willing to make a short journey. The dramatic, cumulative effects of the migrations were thus the result of the small movements of countless individuals and small groups over more than two millennia.

Under-population, the availability of land, and the ease of migration were the key factors in pre-modern, sub-Saharan African politics. Because land was so plentiful, political power had nothing to do with control of territory. It was simply too easy for people discontented with the power structures of their current society to pack up their few possessions and strike out on their own, taking those who were willing to follow and forming new societies in new lands that were likely only a few days' journey from their previous habitation. Instead of control over land, political power in sub-Saharan Africa primarily involved the maintenance of power over people. Would-be rulers needed to provide incentives to keep subject peoples from moving away from their hegemony. Such incentives might and did sometimes include force, but most African rulers sought other ways to maintain power over their subjects. For example, some African states or micro-states created "title systems," wherein the men of the society would achieve titles—and thus an enhanced reputation and greater respect—by accomplishing feats that were important to the community. African societies also included "age rank" systems, where all of the men and boys of a certain age were grouped together and given responsibilities specific to their particular age rank. Both title systems and age ranks involved special rituals that drew the whole community as spectators and participants. In addition, most African societies developed markets for exchanging goods and for socializing; they organized their calendars around "market weeks" (with e.g., a village market in operation every fifth day) much as the western, Christian calendar was oriented around Sundays or the Jewish calendar around the Sabbath. All of these structures and institutions led people to identify with a particular society and to commit to those in power over that society. In short, these mechanisms resulted in "buy in" among those who might otherwise have gone seeking new lands.

Bantu peoples of sub-Saharan Africa proved highly adaptable to the various environments of the continent. Inhabitants of the rain forest regions came to rely on vine crops, particularly African yams, for sustenance. Those who migrated into the areas around the Great Lakes and the Great Rift Valley developed cereal agriculture (particularly sorghum), while those in areas with higher rainfall planted banana groves, the fruit of which served as the staple of local diets. In areas with rainfall levels too low for intensive agriculture, as for instance in the savannah lands of the Serengeti Plain in east Africa or the arid regions around the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa, migrants came to rely almost entirely on cattle. In these pastoral societies, cattle formed the basis of wealth and exchange, both economically and socially. The men who owned the largest number of cattle had the highest reputations and thus the greatest share of political power. Pastoral societies were invariably patriarchal (inheritance passed through the male line) and patrilocal (the bride went to live with her husband's family at marriage) and were usually polygynous; they exchanged cattle for brides (of whom they might have many) in a practice called *lobola* in several southern African Bantu languages. These exchanges created both alliances and rivalries as powerful families joined their properties and aligned their kinship with other families, to the exclusion of rivals. Many agricultural societies were patriarchal as well, but some in central and southern Africa developed matriarchal and uxorilocal (where the bridegroom relocates to his bride's family's compound at marriage)

customs of inheritance. This variation of social organization is yet another example of the diversity of human life in Africa.

The spread of agriculture in Africa corresponded with the development of metallurgy. While parts of northern Africa, especially Egypt and Nubia, developed bronze technology very early (fourth and third millennia, BCE, respectively), most of sub-Saharan Africa did not experience a distinct Bronze Age. Instead, several societies began to smelt copper around the same time as they learned to do the same with iron: in the early first millennium BCE around the Niger River, mid-first millennium BCE in the Great Lakes region, and late first millennium BCE in the plains of east Africa. Iron tools—especially hoes and other digging implements—were essential to agricultural societies and were thus usually the most prized and permanent of all possessions for farmers who tended to migrate every few years. Those with knowledge of metallurgy came to occupy important positions in these societies. Blacksmiths were accorded respect because their work was so important to their communities, but they were also stigmatized and held under suspicion due to the dangerous, secretive, and—to many observers—almost magical nature of their work. Like other personalities and institutions in African societies, the stigmatized and respected positions of metalworkers were reinforced by ritual and folklore.

Ethiopia and Christianity

The civilization of the Ethiopian highlands has been heir to multiple inheritances that have shaped it over the past three millennia. One cultural legacy came from the north and west, down (i.e., north) the Blue Nile, where several kingdoms existed in ancient Nubia. Kerma (c.2500-1100 BCE), Kush (c.850-600 BCE), and Meroë (c.600 BCE-350 CE) exerted varying levels of hegemony over the lands between the third and sixth cataracts of the Nile (Meroë lay just south of the Blue-White Nile convergence). All were influenced primarily by the culture of Pharaonic Egypt (seen especially in artwork and the construction of pyramid tombs). Some of this inheritance passed into the Ethiopian highlands from the intervening Gash Delta region, home to the ancient kingdom of Daamat. Another cultural legacy came from the Arabian Peninsula and, by extension, from the Fertile Crescent, including probably some form of the Jewish religion; Ethiopia was long home to a community of Jews (known as *Falashas* or *Beta Israel*) who traced their ancestry (though perhaps only via mythical lineages) back to the ancient kingdom of Israel. Ethiopia was also in the ancient contact zone between Nilo-Saharan and Bantu peoples and was one of the earliest areas in Africa to pass through the Agricultural Revolution and to develop iron technology (probably fourth century BCE).

The earliest hegemonic entity in Ethiopia itself was the kingdom of Axum, which exerted authority over an area extending from the Red Sea coast to the edge of the highlands (roughly modern Eritrea) from the first through early tenth centuries CE. Perhaps as early as the fourth century, Ethiopia was exposed to Christianity, which quickly became the dominant religion of the area. According to legend, a Byzantine missionary named Frumentius preached Christianity and converted the Axumite king Ezana, who paved the way for the mass conversion of his people. Unlike Nubia, which was exposed to Christianity around the same time yet remained highly dependent on church authorities and took its cultural cues from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean, Axum was remote enough to develop its own unique Christian beliefs and practices. The Ge'ez language of Axum came to constitute a sacred language, as biblical texts were translated into the language and new works of theology and devotion were composed with

it; the evolution and death of the language (i.e., its passage out of use for everyday speech) enhanced its sacred status, much as happened with Latin in western Christendom.

With the Muslim conquest of southern Arabia in the seventh century, the kingdom of Axum found itself in a threatened position, especially because of its adherence to Christianity. Axumites fled Arab incursions across the Red Sea and found relative safety in the mountain fastnesses of the Ethiopian highlands. In this new location, they were even more cut off from other parts of the Christian world and thus continued to develop their own unique religious forms. In the highlands, the migrants from coastal Axum also mixed with the Cushitic agriculturalists of the highlands and converted the many of the latter to Christianity, perhaps drawing in the process on some of the cultural traditions of the mountain natives. The Zagwe Dynasty (1137-1270), centered on the city of Lalibela, was particularly renowned for its building of monolithic (carved from a single piece of stone) churches, most notably the famous Church of Saint George in Lalibela, carved in the shape of a cross from the sandstone bedrock of the area. The Zagwe rulers patterned their kingdom after the ancient Israelite kingdom, even naming the main river in the area after the Jordan River of biblical fame.

In 1270, Yekuno Amlak overthrew the reigning Zagwe emperor and took the title of emperor for himself. Importantly, Yekuno Amlak traced his ancestry back to the biblical king Solomon, an identification that tied his dynasty (the Solomonic rulers) to the religious foundations of the kingdom. In fact, all the rulers of Ethiopia up to 1974 (when Haile Selassie was overthrown and murdered) claimed the same descent. This dynasty created a mythology, housed in a sacred text known as the *Kebra Nagast*, that claimed the kingship of ancient Israel had passed to Menelik, the son produced by the liaison between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (see 1 Kings 10), and that God had given Menelik a commandment to remove the Ark of the Covenant from the Jerusalem temple and place it in a new shrine in Ethiopia. The Christianity of the Solomonic Dynasty was thus bound up closely with evocations of ancient Israel and with Old Testament identities. Under the reign of Amda Siyon, the dynasty managed to conquer and consolidate power over much of the horn of Africa from its base on the plateau. During the era of the Solomonic dynasty, Ethiopian society and culture reached a high point of development. Nobles controlled much of the land, while peasants were subjected to high taxation. However, adventurous peasants struck out on their own into virgin territory, interacting with and spreading Christianity to the Oromo peoples to the south of the highlands. Monasteries with missionary monks were also highly active institutions in the spread and development of Ethiopian Christianity. The Solomonic kingdom always had to deal with the threat of Muslim forces from south Arabia and the Red Sea coast; at times, the Christians advanced into their ancestral Axumite lands, but eventually the Solomonic kings saw their armies pushed back onto the plateau. In 1529, a Muslim army under the leadership of the Somali Adal Sultan, with support from the newly-ascendant Ottoman empire, attacked the plateau and shattered the kingdom's hegemony. Ethiopia only survived as a Christian kingdom due to Portuguese intervention, though the Europeans were sometimes critical of the practices and beliefs of Ethiopian Christians. Oromo migrations in the intervening centuries further disrupted the unity of the plateau. Kings were mostly weak, ceding autonomy to powerful nobles, until the restoration of unity in the nineteenth century.

Kingdoms of the Sahel

The western Sahel, along the upper bend of the Niger River, witnessed the rise of several large kingdoms, even empires, beginning in the second half of the first millennium CE. Political power in these kingdoms revolved around control of natural resources, especially gold and slaves (though salt was also an important commodity), which they traded with trans-Saharan merchants. Berber peoples had run camel caravans across the Sahara since ancient times, and these became a steady source of long-distance trade after the Muslim conquests of northern Africa. Traversing the Sahara was, in its own way, a lot like crossing an ocean. It required specialized knowledge (e.g., where to find food and water, how to take shelter during sandstorms) yet was incredibly lucrative for those who possessed this knowledge and made the crossing successfully. Trans-Saharan merchants formed partnerships with the kings and other notable figures in several successive west African kingdoms and empires, procuring from them lucrative commodities like gold, slaves, and salt, which they then conveyed overland to Mediterranean ports. These merchants also helped to spread Islam to the west African Sahel, since they formed a constantly-changing yet persistent community of Muslims in the population centers of that region. Trade exposed west African kings and nobles to Islam, and several of them displayed at least a partial conversion to the religion, while retaining some ancestral beliefs, especially those that defined the king's prominent role in the kingdom's religion. Few African kings were willing to cede religious authority to Qur'anic scholars or Muslim holy men, even if they accepted them as advisors and allowed them both to build elaborate mosques and to offer formal education to the kingdom's population. Though it took several centuries, Islam ultimately became the most prominent religion in the region; it was, however, usually a hybrid faith with elements of traditional African beliefs and practices intermingled with the tenets of traditional Islam.

Kingdom of Ghana

The first empire of the Sahel was called Ghana, a name coterminous with the ruler's title. The Ghana ruled over much of the western part of the upper Niger (well north and west of the modern nation of Ghana, despite the shared name), with a kind of capital at Koumbi Saleh on the edge of the Sahara. Although the details of the kingdom's political and social structures are obscured by inadequate and complicated source material—most of the evidence comes from Muslim chroniclers whose primary interest was the advancement of their religion—it is apparent that the Ghana's authority rested primarily on his monopoly over the rich Bambuk gold fields, the resources of which he traded with trans-Saharan Islamic merchants. The kings were able to maintain this control between at least the ninth and eleventh centuries. Much of the kingdom converted to Islam, though in hybrid fashion, and even the later Ghanas identified themselves as Muslims. Several factors contributed to the decline of the kingdom, most notably the Ghanas' inability to maintain their monopoly over the gold fields, though the kingdom may have suffered invasion by the Almoravids in their quest to spread and enforce their fundamentalist vision of Islam.

In truth, large kingdoms like Ghana were the exception rather than the rule in west Africa, as most political hegemonies extended only over several villages. Such a collection of villages was known in west Africa as a *kafu* (the term comes from the Mande language). It is likely that the truncated Ghana kingdom became merely another *kafu* in a political landscape dominated by these institutions. The standard west African *kafu* featured a main population center, usually a walled compound, with the surrounding farmland and grazing land, along with satellite villages. Outside of the *kafu* lay the wilderness, a threatening place filled with wild

animals and supernatural forces and accessible only to the bravest hunters and adventurers. This tension between settled lands and the wilderness is a major feature of west African oral tradition.

Kingdom of Mali

After much conflict between various *kafus* after the decline of the Ghana empire, one *kafu* eventually carved out another large kingdom by subjecting other *kafus* to its dominant rule. This is likely how Mali, the next large Sahelian empire, was established, though the figure of Sundiata Keita is identified in oral traditions all over west Africa as its founder by conquest. From his capital of Niani, the emperor of Mali eventually ruled over a territory that incorporated most of the upper Niger River and extended west to the Atlantic coast of what is now Senegal. As was the case with Ghana, the rulers of Mali maintained their power through their control of the trade in natural resources, especially gold, slaves, and salt, though gold deposits were not confined to a single major field as they were in Ghana. The emperors of Mali also courted Islamic merchants and learned men, converting on a provisionary basis while maintaining traditional religious beliefs and institutions. The empire reached its height with the early fourteenth-century reign of Mansa Musa (c. 1280-c. 1337), who made a pilgrimage to Mecca between 1324 and 1326, distributing so much gold in alms along his journey that the value of gold in Egypt nearly collapsed. Mansa Musa is displayed European manuscript illustrations, which show him seated on a golden throne holding the insignia (crown, scepter, orb) of a European monarch. Islamic education and intellectual endeavor thrived in his empire, especially in cities like Djenne and Timbuktu.

Mali did not disappear as a sizable kingdom until the sixteenth century, but it was outpaced in size and power by the Songhay Empire in middle of the fifteenth century. Based in the city of Gao, which had been an important population center since the eleventh century, Songhay ruled over a huge swath of land in the Sahel, stretching nearly to Lake Chad in the East and to the Atlantic in the west. Like the earlier empires, the king and others who held power did so through control of resources like slaves, gold, and salt, though craftsmen also flourished under the peace enforced by a standing army. Occupations tended to run within kinship groups, so some extended families became very wealthy by selling their expert wares to trans-Saharan merchants who congregated in the major cities along the Niger River. Elites tended to be Muslim, while commoners held on to traditional beliefs and practices. Songhay's dominance was brought to a rather abrupt halt by a late sixteenth-century war of succession followed by an invasion by the army (armed with gunpowder weapons) of al-Mansur, sultan of Morocco. Though the Moroccans seized resources to replenish their empty coffers (they had been fighting the Portuguese for several decades at this point), they never really tried to govern from across the Sahara and thus left a power vacuum in the Sahel.

With the destruction of Songhay, west Africa was divided into a number of smaller kingdoms and *kafus* over the next two centuries. In some, Islam served as a kind of cultural welding mechanism, but in others it existed alongside, and in tension with, native religious forms. As the transatlantic slave trade began to have dramatic effects on Africa in the seventeenth centuries, the economies of many of these kingdoms came to revolve around procuring, holding, and selling slaves. The slave trade will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

East Africa: Coast and Interior

Unlike much of the rest of the African continent (though like the north African coast), the east African coast has been tied economically and politically to other parts of the world since antiquity. Coastal villages and towns participated in the vast trading network that stretched throughout the Indian Ocean. Beginning in the seventh century CE, Muslim traders built port cities all along the east African coast; these trade centers included Mogadishu, Kilwa, Mombasa, and Sofala. Trade contributed to the expansion of Islam, though most practitioners of the religion were immigrants from the Arabian Peninsula. These Arab merchants established trading contacts with peoples of the interior, procuring a variety of goods from them, including, most prominently, gold and slaves but also luxury items like ivory, teak, and incense. Coastal communities also produced spices, employing slave labor on spice plantations. Archaeological finds on both coast and interior indicate that African peoples possessed items like Chinese porcelain, a good indication of the degree of the coast's integration into the international trading network. Coastal Arabs did not usually venture into the interior, relying instead on African peoples (called *Zanj* in Arabic) to bring goods and slaves to the coast. This contact between Africans and Arabs led to the rise of the Swahili language (a Bantu tongue with many Arabic loan words) as a *lingua franca* for the region. Indeed, the area is referred to as the Swahili Coast.

In the tenth century, Ali ibn al-Hassan Shirazi, a Persian prince shut out of his family's royal inheritance, sailed down the Swahili Coast and purchased the island of Kilwa from the native Bantus. Kilwa subsequently became the most prosperous commercial center in East Africa, supplanting Mogadishu. Partly through skillful commerce and partly through military conquest, the Sultans of Kilwa came to dominate the entire Swahili Coast, including holding direct lordship over the important ports of Mombasa, Pemba, and Sofala. The Sultans did allow a great deal of autonomy to local rulers, a tolerant policy that probably contributed to commercial prosperity. Kilwa held this prime position until a Portuguese invasion in 1513 wrested much of the coast away from its control.

Trade with the coast could prove a tremendous boon to the economies of the interior, which were primarily either pastoral or agricultural. These societies often supplemented their livelihoods by tapping gold deposits or procuring war captives and trading these commodities with coastal Arab merchants. The kingdom of Great Zimbabwe is an excellent, early example of the benefits of this mixed economy. In a kingdom of pastoralists wherein wealth was equated with cattle ownership, the king was simply the man with the most cattle. Sometime around the eleventh century, the Shona began mining gold and trading it with merchants on the coast. This enabled the Shona rulers to procure even larger cattle herds and to begin building walled compounds (*zimbabwes*) that served as residences, ritual centers, and cattle pens. Around 1200, Shona rulers began building the greatest of these—Great Zimbabwe near Lake Mutirikwe—as the royal residence. Covering more than 1700 acres, this compound featured extensive walls constructed by placing stones carefully together without mortar, some of them reaching eleven meters tall and ornamented with chevron patterns and avian statuary. Great Zimbabwe had as many as 18,000 residents at its height, demonstrating the Shona kings' ability to assemble large networks of dependent subjects. Construction at the site continued for over 300 years, coming to a halt only with the decline of the Shona kingdom in the fifteenth century.

While the Portuguese were able to take control of much of the Swahili Coast in the sixteenth century, Arab rulers from Oman managed to wrest away much of the northern part of the coastland in the late seventeenth century, setting up a trading empire with a regional capital on the island of Zanzibar. The Sultans of Oman even moved their primary residence to Zanzibar for a time. Instead of relying on interior traders coming to the coast, agents of the Sultans were

the first Arabs to venture earnestly into the interior of the continent. In the nineteenth century, under the command of an adventurer known as Tippu Tip, Zanzibaris controlled much of the land between the coast and the Great Lakes and used their dominant position to procure slaves, ivory, and other goods. Many of the captured slaves ended up on Zanzibar, working on clove plantations as the island came to dominate the world market in that spice.

As Zanzibar was coming to dominate the coast, several kingdoms were taking shape around the Great Lakes. Most prominent of these were Bunyoro, to the northwest of Lake Victoria, and Buganda, its powerful neighbor and frequent enemy on the northern shore of the same lake. These and other kingdoms had not only formidable armies, but also powerful navies operating war canoes on Lake Victoria and other waterways. While these kingdoms focused their primary attention on each other, they were also participants in larger trends, as they entertained trading and diplomatic partnerships with both the Portuguese and Zanzibaris, and later with the British. The spread of both Islam and Christianity acted by turns as unifying and dividing forces in these societies.

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Slavery had been an institution in Africa since antiquity, just as it was in every society in the ancient and medieval West and in civilizations all over Asia in the same periods. Powerful individuals and societies—in Africa as in other parts of the world—procured war captives and others as slaves, forcing them to work primarily as field hands and domestic laborers, though also occasionally to provide sexual favors and other specialized services.

The nature of slavery in Africa changed dramatically, however, from the fifteenth century on as Europeans exhibited new demand for slaves. Initially, the Portuguese were motivated to explore the Atlantic coast of Africa in order to tap the continent's legendary gold resources directly, rather than having to deal with trans-Saharan middlemen. However, when the Portuguese began to understand that gold deposits were located well inland from the coast, and when they discovered that they could get to India (and thus achieve direct access to the valuable spice trade) by sailing around Africa, their motivations changed. They began to see Africa primarily as a place to procure slaves and secondarily as a place where they (or rather, missionaries sponsored by the Portuguese crown) could convert natives to Christianity.

The desire to obtain slaves from Africa increased exponentially with the European discovery of the Americas, where Europeans set up sugar, coffee, and other agricultural plantations requiring tremendous amounts of manual labor. Since smallpox and other Old World diseases had ravaged the native American population, Europeans turned to African slave labor to work these plantations. Africans were exposed to the same disease pool as Europeans and thus endured smallpox and other illnesses better. African societies who were already accustomed to taking war captives as slaves made ready trading partners with Europeans seeking slaves. By the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese had been joined by the Spanish, the Dutch, the French, and the English in their quest to obtain slaves for New World plantations. This demand grew exponentially over time, reaching a high point in the eighteenth century, before the abolitionist movement in Europe began to exert pressure on governments to end the trade in human chattel.

The majority of slaves who fell into European hands did so after having been taken captive by African leaders, though in some cases Europeans conducted raiding expeditions of their own; the latter was particularly the case for the Portuguese operating in central Africa around the Congo River basin. In west Africa, where the English and French were the primary slave merchants, the economic foundations of several African kingdoms came to rest on the

slave trade. The king of Dahomey (modern Benin), for instance, employed an army of fierce female warriors (referred to in sources as "Amazons"), who raided interior village in an effort to procure slaves, whom they then marched in bonds to the coastal slave markets.

Particularly harrowing for those forced into slavery was the "Middle Passage" aboard ships across the Atlantic. Slave traders packed as many captives into the holds of their ships as possible, subjecting their human cargo to horrific conditions: chained, cramped, and sitting or lying in their own waste while being fed only scant rations. Slave trading firms and individual ship captains projected acceptable numbers of slave deaths aboard the ships, and captains were thus content to throw captives who became ill or belligerent into the ocean rather than risk losing the entire cargo to disease or mutiny. There were relatively few slave rebellions aboard ship, but, given the challenges involved in staging a rebellion against an armed crew on a ship in the middle of the ocean, it is a wonder that any such rebellions took place at all. In fact, there were a few instances of captives taking control of ships and managing to steer them into a port, where some of them managed eventually to obtain freedom.

Africans did rebel against slave traders and slave trade-supporting governments in other ways. In the seventeenth century, Nzinga (1583-1663), queen of Ndongo (modern Angola), used a skillful blend of diplomacy (via alliance with the Dutch) and military strategy to seize Portuguese-controlled towns and to evict the Portuguese from much of her realm. Even after suffering defeat to the Portuguese, she was able to use spies to discern Portuguese movements and to strengthen her power base in the remainder of her territory. Throughout her reign, she aided refugees fleeing the slave trade. In the early eighteenth-century kingdom of Kongo, a woman named (1684-1706) , a visionary woman who claimed her body was inhabited by the spirit of Saint Anthony (Kongo had been converted to Christianity, though in syncretic form, a century earlier as the result of Portuguese missionary efforts), began a new religious movement that amount to a rebellion against the king of Kongo. Much of the appeal of the movement, which preached a uniquely African form of Christianity, was its criticism of the slave trade and specifically of the king's support of that trade.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade formed one side of a triangular economic relationship between three continents. The Americas received huge numbers of slaves from Africa. The total number of slaves has been hotly disputed among scholars, but was probably somewhere between 10 and 20 million over a four-century span. Europeans received the agricultural and other produced generated by slave plantations, most of them in the Caribbean and Brazil, each of which received roughly 40 percent of all African captives during the period of the trade. Africa, on the other hand, got very little of intrinsic value from the trade, though the products it traded for slaves were significant to those Africans who participated in the trade. The chief products that Europeans traded for slaves were guns, alcohol, and textiles. African rulers and merchants used these primarily as gifts to their networks of relatives and allies, who swore loyalty to their benefactors in exchange for these goods. These products, in other words, allowed African leaders to maintain power over the people they valued the most. The benefits, of course, were not long term, and the cost to the continent in lost human capital is truly incalculable.

Nineteenth century: creeping imperialism and African dynamism

The abolitionist movement in Europe finally succeeded in convincing politicians to end the slave trade. Britain was the pioneer in this effort. Pressed by longtime champion of abolition William Wilberforce, Parliament outlawed the buying and selling of slaves within the British Empire in 1807, though people could still own slaves in British lands until 1833. The United

States followed the lead of the British in outlawing the trade (with the northern states banning slavery in 1804), but slavery as an institution continued in the southern United States until 1865. Technically, the French had abolished it earlier, in 1794 as part of the sweeping changes of French Revolution, but Napoleon restored the institution in French colonies in 1802; final abolition in France came only in 1848. Portugal and independent Brazil held fast to slavery until 1869 and 1888, respectively, so the slave trade continued in some areas of the world through much of the nineteenth century.

The abolition of slavery provided many challenges and opportunities for African peoples. Some adapted to the new situation in creative ways, while others continued to rely on an increasingly-defunct institution to prop up their waning kingdoms and individual livelihoods. Many kingdoms and other hegemonies continued to raid their neighbors in order to procure captives they could sell as slaves. Under European (especially British) pressure to cease trading in slaves on the Atlantic coast, these slave raiders found buyers in the interior of the African continent, especially Arab merchants crossing the Sahara or Portuguese operating on the east coast of the continent. Internal African slavery saw a significant increase in the nineteenth century as African rulers established their own slave-worked plantations and other institutions.

Other Africans turned away from slavery and found success trading in agricultural goods and minerals that were in demand both locally and globally. The most significant new product was palm oil, derived from the fruit of the oil palm and used as a lubricant for machines in the newly-industrialized parts of the world. These new markets often challenged and even supplanted prevailing authorities and economic structures. African entrepreneurs who took advantage of these new opportunities profited handsomely, but they often did so at the cost of some of their hegemony as Europeans claimed land for the building of roads, railroads, warehouses, and other necessary commercial institutions.

Apart from the Cape of Good Hope region, where European settlers had lived since the middle of the seventeenth century and where the British set up a colony in the first part of the nineteenth century, Europeans did not claim direct governance over African lands in the first half of the nineteenth century. The few Europeans who made their way into the interior of the continent—adventurers like Mungo Park searching for the famed city of Timbuktu, for instance, or businessmen seeking to access palm oil and other exports at their interior sources—tended to die in shockingly huge numbers, mostly from malaria, a disease to which Africans were more accustomed. Not until the drug quinine came into common use as a prophylaxis against malaria, in the middle of the nineteenth century, did Europeans enter and survive travel in Africa in large numbers. European missionaries were quite active in some parts of the continent in the early nineteenth century. The most famous of these was David Livingstone, who combined spreading the Christian gospel with scientific and geographical inquiry, particularly his decades-long quest to find the source of the Nile in central Africa (a goal he never achieved). Various European countries came to lay informal claims to parts of Africa—for trading or missionary operations—but they did not establish real colonial infrastructure (governing bureaucracy, police force, large settler population, etc.) in most parts of Africa until the end of the nineteenth century. Africa thus entered into colonialism rather late, at least when compared to other parts of the world like Latin America or India, and the period of colonialism in Africa was significantly shorter than in the rest of the European-dominated world. Scholars have tended to use terms like “creeping colonialism” to refer to processes at work in early and mid-nineteenth century Africa.

The early nineteenth century did witness a great deal of political and economic creativity on the part of Africans. The rise of two powerful hegemonies—one in the west African Sahel and the other in southern Africa—demonstrates this native creativity at work.

In some of the lands formerly occupied by the Songhay Empire—the region to the north of the Niger-Benue confluence—Usuman dan Fodio (1754-1817) led an Islamic *jihad* that shattered the power of the Bornu empire and other regional monarchies, conquered vast territories, and united the various groups of Hausa-speakers under a single Islamic banner. Called the Sokoto Caliphate and patterned after the original, seventh-century of Muhammad's successors, this empire presided over the final, mass, sometimes-coerced conversion of Sahelian peoples to Islam (though the religion was still syncretic in some cases) and eventually subjected even many of the peoples of the coastal rainforest region to the Caliphate's hegemony. At the head of the empire sat the *Caliph* (also sometimes called *Sultan*) himself, holding both secular and religious authority. Most of the caliphs, including dan Fodio, had little interest in political intrigue and preferred scholarly seclusion. The day-to-day governing of the empire thus rested largely in the hands of autonomous regional governors called *Emirs*. These and other noblemen controlled vast plantations and owned huge numbers of slaves, although these slaves were not usually considered chattel and probably lived much like their overseers did. The Caliphate retained control over its vast territories for nearly a century, before British and French interference altered the power structures of west Africa.

Around the same time as dan Fodio was establishing the Sokoto Caliphate, Shaka Zulu (1787-1828), the leader of a newly-cohesive Bantu group called the Zulu, began adopting new military tactics and strategies to attack, scatter, and dominate his neighbors and rivals. Shaka's military innovations included the adoption of small shields and short stabbing spears (replacing traditional large shields and long spears) that enabled his warriors to flank enemy troops and engage in close combat, rather than participate in the traditional spear-throwing and posturing from across the battlefield, tactics to which southern African fighters were accustomed. Shaka organized his warriors into age ranks, giving each rank specific military tasks and thus fostering a warrior culture generally among his people. As his attacks decimated his neighbors and procured more land for the Zulus, adventurous warriors and even former enemies joined with Shaka's army and came to identify themselves as Zulus. Many defeated peoples abandoned their ancestral lands and fled, some across the Drakensberg Mountains to the plateau between the Vaal and Limpopo Rivers and some even as far as the Great Lakes region. White, Afrikaans pioneers (descendants of the first Dutch, French, and German settlers) who fled the now-British Cape also entered into the fray, forcing some of the peoples previously defeated by the Zulus out of the plateau and even entering for a time into Zulu territory before moving back to the Highveld when the British established the colony of Natal in the lands formerly-dominated by the Zulu. This 25-year (c.1815-1840) sequence of warfare and migration, known as the *mfecane* (Zulu: "crushing"), completely altered the balance of political power in southern Africa and in parts of central and east Africa. Much of that disruption can be attributed to the military innovations of Shaka and his successors, though Zulu aggression did ultimately lead to British interference and British hegemony over both the Cape and Natal, as well as to Afrikaner control of the territories north and west of the Drakensberg. The discovery of vast diamond deposits around Kimberly (in the northern Cape) in the 1870s and eventually the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand region (i.e., around the city of Johannesburg) continued to disrupt societies and political powers in southern Africa.

Conclusion

Leaders of many European nations met in Berlin in 1885 and divided up the African continent among the various European powers, thus prompting the so-called "Scramble for Africa" and the advent of full-scale European colonialism on the continent. This was not, however, the event that drew Africa into history, as some western historians have opined. As this chapter has endeavored to demonstrate, diverse African peoples have eked out an existence and formed cohesive societies and complex civilizations in the hostile environments of that continent for millennia. These mostly-nameless innovators produced their own agricultural and pastoral revolutions and invented metallurgy and other technologies that allowed them to thrive. In addition to witnessing these remarkable intra-continental processes, Africa was a key participant in global processes like the spread of Islam and Christianity, the growth of land-based empires, the global trade in minerals, agricultural products, and slaves, and, eventually, the rise of colonialism. Though the techniques and sources necessary for understanding African history are often scarce, unfamiliar, and challenging (if not completely inaccessible to those without specialized training), the peoples of the African continent are nevertheless worth the attention of students of history.

CHAPTER 19

The Americas to 1492

> America did not need to be "discovered" because quite simply…there were whole groups of people that already lived there including very developed societies such as the Incas, the Aztecs, and the Mayans.
>
> —Alejandro Castro Espín

Introduction

Some historians consider human habitation of Latin America to be relatively "young" compared other regions of the world. It is true that during the Second Out of Africa period the first modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) left Africa, spreading first into Asia and Europe (See Chapter 18 on Africa), eventually migrating to the Americas. Migrations into the Americas likely occurred by travelling across the formation of ice or land transcontinental bridges formed sometime between the Last Glacial Maximum ("LGM," 25 KYA) and the last Ice Age (about 12 KYA). Such Ice Ages remove tremendous quantities of water from oceans in the form of ice, lower sea levels dramatically, making lands that were previously underwater available to humans. Archeologists have found a number of habitable sites in modern Canada and Alaska dating from this time period between 25 and 12 KYA, providing an increasing amount of material evidence (artifacts, biofacts, and ecofacts) to support a growing number of theories about exactly how and precisely when the migrations actually occurred.

Human in the Americas eventually experienced their own unique America Neolithic Revolution. For example, domesticated agriculture appeared in the Valley of Mexico and in the highlands of the Andes Mountains roughly 7000 BCE to 2300 BCE, similar to regions in China and the Near East. One of the first plants domesticated was corn; corn doesn't take much tending. Once harvested, the hard kernels could be ground or boiled and mixed with ground limestone into a paste called *nixtamal* which was used to make unleavened cakes. Early peoples in the Latin American region ate little meat because they had few domesticated animals like the guinea pig in the Andes. Cultivated squash and beans created enough nutrition to sustain a larger population. By 2500 BCE the population of Mesoamerica had increased by twenty-five times. "If an ancient farmer from anywhere in Mesopotamia, China, or India had visited at this, time, he or she would have been amazed to see that no one in Mesoamerica employed the familiar tools of farming—the plow, the wheel, or draft animals. Instead of the plow, the Mesoamericans used different types of digging sticks, and they dragged or carried things themselves. (The only wheels in the Americas appeared on children's toys around 500 CE)." (Curtain)

What is unique to the Americas is its relative isolation from the rest of the world. As human civilizations developed throughout the world, trade also developed which transmitted foods, animals, and ideas across continents. Archaeological evidence supports that peoples came to the Americas throughout history but it was relatively isolated from the civilizations on the Afro-Eurasian continent. Isolation from the world trade networks meant that civilizations developed differently in the Americas and were in direct response to geographic and environmental frameworks specific to the Americas. Throughout its thousands of years of isolation, the Americas developed in much the same stages of cultural development as those

parts of the Old World had experienced. Old Stone Age hunters and gatherers, Neolithic farmers, and complex empires.

Pre-Columbian history of the peoples in the Americas, often referred to as Amerindians, is divided into three periods:

- Formative Period from ca. 2000 BCE to 200 CE
- Classic Era from 200 to 900 CE
- Post-Classic Era from 900 to roughly 1521

The term Classic refers to a flowering of material, intellectual, and artistic culture that marks provides as baseline for measure subsequent civilizational developments. A reoccurring theme in the history of the Americas is the continuation of social, economic, and religious patterns developed in the Formative, or "Pre-Classic" Era and Classical Era and still are apparent in Latin America today.

Formative Era

Mesoamerican Civilizations

Mesoamerica is a geographical sub-region that connects the continents of North America and South America. It extends from the southern regions of modern Mexico southward through Panama to the borders of modern Columbia. The region is known for being the originating place of a uniquely American agricultural revolution center on maize (corn) cultivation). Mesoamerican civilizations built monolithic structures, including step pyramids, developed a base-20 (*vigesimal*) numerical system, a two-calendar system, and pictographic and hieroglyphic written languages.

Olmecs (ca. 2500-400 BCE)

The origin of the Olmecs—a group that formed along the Gulf of Mexico coastal lowlands—is still unclear but the civilization began around 2500 BCE and was thriving by 1600 to 1500 BCE. The origins, development, and disappearance of the Olmec culture remain a mystery. Despite the significant lack of understanding about the Olmecs, it is clear that building techniques, monumental stone carving and sculpture, hieroglyphic writing, and calendar system greatly influenced the Maya who dominated Mesoamerica later. The carving of colossal stone heads is one of the most recognizable feature of Olmec art and civilization. The site of *La Venta* contains a ceremonial area with a 30 foot high earthen pyramid, the largest of its date in all of Mesoamerica. Additionally, the Olmec peoples organized a widespread trading network, carried on religious rituals, and employed a writing system that is similar to the later Mayan writing.

Olmec society consisted of several classes, including skilled artisans, such as those who produced a serious of massive stone heads, some of which are more than 10 feet high. The Olmec peoples sustained themselves by primarily cultivating crops, such as corn and beans. Archaeological evidence show that Olmecs played a ceremonial ball game on a stone ball court and would be later used by the Maya. Eventually, Olmec civilization began to decline and seemly collapsed around the 4th century BCE.

Teotihuacán (c. 200 BCE-600 CE)

The technical, artistic, and scientific advances of the Formative Era laid the foundations for the highpoint achievements of the Classic Era. In Mexico's central highlands, the Classic period opened in grandeur at Teotihuacán (some 28 miles northeast from present-day Mexico City) where two mammoth pyramids, one named for the Sun and the other for the Moon, were constructed towering over a collection of imposing temples and other buildings. This first major metropolis in Mesoamerica arose around the 3rd century BCE and flourished for nearly a thousand years and collapsed mysteriously about 600 CE. The ancient water god, later known to the Aztecs as Tlaloc, seemed to have been Teotihuacán's chief deity, but artwork featuring the feathered serpent with jaguar fangs, later known as Quetzalcóatl and identified with both water and fertility, appeared prominently in the Temple of the Sun.

The great ceremonial center at Teotihuacán was sacred ground that only the priest class and their servants likely inhabited. Farther out were the residential quarters where officials, artisans, and merchants lived. At its height, Teotihuacán sustained up to 200,000 inhabitants. Most of the city consisted of one-story stucco apartment compounds. Living in the fertile Valley of Mexico, a plateau surrounded by snowcapped mountains, the inhabitants of Teotihuacán probably obtained the bulk of their wealth from agriculture. At the time, the valley floor was filled with swamps containing water runoff from the surrounding mountains. The combination of fertile soil and adequate water made the valley one of the richest farming areas in Mesoamerica.

By the 8th century CE the wealth and power of the city began to decline for reasons that are not clear, and eventually its ruling class departed with the priests. The next two centuries were tumultuous and eventually small city-states dominated the political structure of the Valley of Mexico. As the local population expanded, farmers began to engage in more intensive agriculture. They drained parts of the lake to build *chinampas*, floating island and swampy islands crisscrossed by canals that provided water for their crops and easy transportation to local markets for their excess produce.

Other centers of Classic culture in Mesoamerica were contemporary with, but overshadowed by, Teotihuacán. For example to the southwest, at Monte Albán in the mountains near Oaxaca, the Zapotecs built a ceremonial center.

The Maya—c. 200 BCE-900 CE

Far to the east of the Valley of Mexico, another major civilization arose in what is now southern Mexico, the Yucatán peninsula, Guatemala and other neighboring regions in Central America. The Maya were not an empire but a series of city-states including Tikal, Copán, Quirigua, El Mirador, Palenque, which intermittently rose up and declined in Mesoamerica, from about 200 BCE and to 900 CE. Many of the cultural and economic elements of the Maya civilization persist today.

The region dominated by the Maya was a source for cacao trees and obsidian as well as the cultivation of corn, beans, yams, and manioc. Cacao trees were the source of chocolate, which was made into a beverage which the upper classes drunk and the cocoa bean was used as currency in the markets in the region. By 500 CE the entire area was dotted with small city-states competing for land and resources. The largest urban centers such as Tikal may have had 100,000 inhabitants at their height and exhibited sophisticated levels of technology and cultural achievement.

Each city-state was ruled by a dynasty of hereditary kings. These kings had absolute power within their realms and were considered god-like. The rulers exercised considerable

power and resources to oversee the construction of large pyramid and temple complexes. There were no standing armies, but warfare played an important role in religion, power, and prestige. Because Mayan government was not a unified empire, the city-states competed and fought each other for dominance. Usually one city-state would control a region for a number of years, requiring tribute from the neighboring city-states. Overtime, these dominate city-states would rise and fall. Knives and clubs embedded with obsidian were the most lethal weapons. The Maya did not develop metal tools or weapons, and consequently remained in what would be termed a stone-age technological condition. Nonetheless, Obsidian is one of the sharpest elements. The obsidian was extremely sharp but could be destroyed by harder minerals.

Around the King's court, a class of nobles formed whose wealth was probably based on the ownership of land farmed by poorer relatives. Eventually, many of the nobles became priests or scribes at the royal court or adopted professions as sculptors or painters. As the society's wealth grew, so did the role of artisans and traders, who began to form a small middle class. However, the majority of the population in the Maya region were farmers. They lived on their plots of lands (*milpa*) and dwelled in houses made of adobe and thatched roofs. Maya farmers developed sophisticated irrigation systems and drained swamps for arable land as the population grew. Although there is evidence that the Maya understood what wheels were because they are found in toys unearthed in archaeological sites, but farmers didn't use them. They worked unaided by wheels, plows, draft animals, or metal tools.

Like many of the early beliefs in other regions of the world, Maya religion was polytheistic. Although the names were different, Maya gods shared many of the characteristics of deities of nearby cultures. Maya gods were ranked in order of importance and had human characteristics. Some gods were a combination of human and animal powers. For example the jaguar figured heavily in the origin myths of the gods and later as part gods of the rulers. Major elements of the Maya religion were bloodletting and human sacrifice. Bloodletting is the spilling of blood as a sacrificial practice. The Mayan gods demanded blood as recompense for the creation of the cosmos, in which where the gods spilled their blood in order to give life to humanity. The practice of bloodletting would often serve to commemorate and honor important events such as births, ascents to thrones, and anniversaries. On the other hand, human sacrifice was reserved for the most important Maya events.

The Maya would often combine aspects of warfare and religion. Typically this was in the form of taking prisoners for sacrifice. Sacrifices were important in keeping the gods satisfied and were also vital in ensuring a military victory. When a king or queen would ascend to the throne and a political prisoner had been captured, they would commemorate the event with a human sacrifice. Typically, these prisoners would be royals or elites of an enemy state. These sacrifices were performed in many ways, but there were three methods that were most common. The first method was through decapitation. The next method was that of removing the heart from the living person. The most common method was throwing a living person into a *cenote*, or deep natural well, as an offering to the gods.

Maya cities were built around a ceremonial core dominated by a central pyramid which on top was a shrine to the gods. Nearby were other temples, palaces, and a sacred ball court. The ball court was a rectangular space surrounded by vertical walls with stone rings through which the players attempted to hit a small rubber ball through without using hands. The Maya were not the originators of the ball game because ball courts show up in many of the ruins of other indigenous groups from before and after the Maya. The exact rules of the game or who the players were is not known for certain. Players were frequently depicted in Mesoamerican art.

Historians disagree on the ultimate outcome of the game. Some say that the losers would be sacrificed. Others say it was only for ritual purposes. It is clear that from city-state to city-state the ball court was an important part of the city and played a role in religion.

The Maya priests were obsessed with their understanding of time, to which they assigned sacred meaning. They developed a calendar that was more accurate than our present calendar in adjusting for the exact length of the solar year. Maya theologians believed that time was a burden that the gods carried on their backs. At the end of a certain period, one god laid down his burden for another god to pick up and continue on the journey of time. A given day or year was lucky or unlucky depending on whether the god-bearer at the time was a benevolent or a malevolent god. Thus, the Maya calendars were primarily divinatory in character—used to predict conditions in a particular time period.

The Maya had two calendars. One was a sacred circle of 260 days that corresponded to the pattern of ceremonial religious life. This calendar was composed of two intermeshing and recurrent cycles of different lengths: one of thirteen days, recorded as numbers, and the second of twenty days, recorded as names. The name of the fourteenth day-name began with one again. A second cycle was the solar year of 365 days, divided into eighteen "months" of twenty days each, plus a final period of five unlucky days during which they banned all unnecessary activity. Completion of these two cycles coincided every fifty-two years. This elaborate calendar, which measures time back to 3114 BCE, required a sophisticated understanding of astronomical events and mathematics to compile.

The Maya developed the science of mathematics further than any of their Mesoamerican neighbors. They used a 20-based number system and understood the concept of zero. Their units were ones, fives, and twenties and multiple of twenties. Place value numeration, based on a sign of zero, was perhaps the greatest intellectual development of Ancient America. The system was far superior to the contemporary western European arithmetic system that —prior to the invention of the Hindu-Arabic numeral system, decimal place-values, the number line, Algebra and Trigonometry by Muslim scientists in the ninth an tenth centuries (see chapter 15)—used cumbersome Roman numbers.

The Maya also created a sophisticated writing system that until 2000 CE was only rudimentarily understood. Once the Maya code was then "cracked," scholars are learning more and understanding far more than ever before about the Maya. The Maya use hieroglyphics, or "glyphs," that represent a combination of phonetics and pictures. Scholars realized that one could write a single Mayan word several different ways: entirely pictorially, or using a combination of both phonetic sounds and pictures. It is as if one could write *hat* in English by drawing a picture of a hat {} or writing h+a+t, h+@+t, or simply h+@." The responsibility for compiling official records in the Maya city-states was given to a class of scribes, who wrote on dear skin or strips of tree bark. Unfortunately, nearly all such records have been destroyed by the humid climate of the rainforest or burned by early Spanish missionaries. Hence the only surviving written record of the classical Maya era are those carved in stone. One of the most important sources of Mayan glyphs is in Palenque, an archaeological site in southern Mexico. In a chamber located under the Temple of Inscriptions, archaeologists discovered a royal tomb and a massive limestone slab covered with glyphs. The inscriptions identify the ruler as K'inich Janaab' Pakal (603-683 CE), who ordered the construction of the temple.

Sometime in the eighth or ninth century, the classical Maya civilization in the central Yucatán peninsula began to decline. At Copán, for example, it ended abruptly in 822 CE, when work on various stone sculptures ordered by the ruler suddenly ceased. The end of Palenque

soon followed, and the city of Tikal was abandoned by 870 CE. There is some mystery as to why the Maya declined and city-states were construction and maintenance worked abruptly ceased. The last strong city-state was at Chichen Itza on the north of the Yucatán peninsula. Additionally, roads or *sacbees* that had been built from city to city on the peninsula to promote trade fell into disuse and disrepair.

> Whether the decline was caused by overuse of the land, or a natural disaster such as volcanic eruption is a question that has puzzled archaeologists for decades. Recent evidence supports the theory that over-cultivation of the land due to a growing population gradually reduced crop yields. A long drought, which lasted throughout most of the ninth and tenth centuries CE, may have played a major role, although the city-state of Tikal, blessed with fertile soil and the presence of nearby Lake Petén, did not appear to suffer from a lack of water. (Duiker)

Until further evidence is discovered, historians generally rely upon a series of multiple causes for the decline. Cities were over grown by jungle vegetation and "disappeared." While visiting any archaeological site today in historical Maya areas, one can see mounds and hills covered with vegetation. Under most of the vegetation are temples and pyramids yet to be excavated. New sites are being discovered continually and evidence from those sites will shed new understanding on the Maya.

Peoples of the Andes, 3100 BCE-1000 CE

South America is a vast continent with extreme differences in climate and geography. The northeast is dominated by the massive Amazon River basin, whereas a spine of tall mountain ranges and peaks known as the Andes Mountain separate the Amazon Basin from the Western Pacific regions. Archaeological evidence of developing civilizations in the Andes Mountains predate the Olmecs of Mesoamerica. Because ocean currents along the coast of South America bring very cold water from the Antarctica, the region between the coast and the Andes Mountains are very dry. Some of the driest places on the planet are located in that region between the coast and the mountains, such as the Atacama Desert and the Peruvian-Bolivian *altiplano*. Ancient peoples of the region were often compelled to cultivate in the highlands, with elevations well above 10,000 feet. Numerous varieties of potatoes were developed in the higher altitude and were supplemented by squash, chili peppers, and beans. Corn was also cultivated in the lower altitude. Sophisticated systems of irrigation and land terracing allowed for native groups to thrive. The only beasts of burden that were indigenous to the highland regions were the llama and alpaca although neither could carry humans.

Earliest site of complex human societies in Andes was Caral (100 miles north of Lima). By 2500 BCE (a thousand years before earliest cities in Mesoamerica) the first urban settlements appeared in the area. The archaeological site at Caral reveals remnants of a 60 foot high pyramid and settlement with farming in the surrounding area. Out of this culture developed a culture called Chavín which flourished between about 900 to 200 BCE. The ceremonial precinct at the site in Chavín de Huántar contained an impressive stone temple complete with interior rooms, a stone-blocked ceiling, and a system of underground canals that channeled water to the temples. Evidence of metallurgy has also been found with objects made of copper and gold.

Moche— c. 1 CE-800 CE

Chavín society had declined and faded by 200 BCE but another complex civilization appeared in northern Peru along the Moche River which flows from the foothills of the Andes to the Pacific Ocean. The capital city was well over 10,000 people and they erected two massive adobe pyramids nearly 100 feet high. The largest, known as the Pyramid of the Moon, covered a total of fifteen acres and contained painted murals depicting battles, ritual sacrifices, and various local deities.

Artifacts found at Moche, especially the metalwork and stone and ceramic figures, exhibit a high quality of artisanship. The city's influence was felt in the surrounding area because artwork was found in the same style and theme in the region. One site in Peru, in continuous use after 700, had draft furnaces in which families melted fuel and metal ore together, producing slag with copper in it, which they extracted and worked into ingots, small sheets, or "ax money"—ax shaped pieces of metal tied together in bundles and placed in tombs as an offering for the dead.

Environmental extreme changes impacted the continual strength of the Moche. At its height, Moche culture developed sophisticated irrigation systems to carry water from the river to the drought effected fields. By the 8th century CE, the severe conditions had taken its toll and the region was in a state of collapse, the irrigation canals had been abandoned, and the remaining population had left the area and moved farther inland or suffered from malnutrition.

Tiahuanaco—c. 300-1150 CE

Around 600 CE, the focus of Andean civilization shifted from the coast to the highlands. At the site called Tiahuanaco, just south of Lake Titicaca on the high plain of present-day Bolivia, a great ceremonial center arose that was famed for its megalithic architecture, which was constructed with great stone blocks perfectly fitted together. Tiahuanaco seems to have been the capital of a military state that eventually controlled all of southern Peru from Arequipa south to highland Bolivia and Chile. The Tiahuanacos mastered a method of agriculture using *suka kollu*s techniques: raised platforms of land under cultivation surrounded by canals filled with water and fish. The water helped elevate the temperature of the elevated land, while fish provided food and important fertilizer for the plants. The *suka kollus* system proved very effective in the *altiplano*, and provided yields that were impressive even when compared to modern agricultural outcomes. There is no clear explanation for abandoning the *suka kollus* system of agriculture. Modern agronomists in the United States and elsewhere are researching ways in which *suka kollus* agriculture might be reintroduced to the *altiplano*, and into many regions of the world—including the United States.

Chimú—ca. 1000-1470 CE

By 1000 CE, a number of Post-classic states, which differed from their predecessors in their larger size, had established control over large portions of the northern Peruvian coast. The growth of cities accompanied their rise. Each river valley had its own urban center, and an expanded net of irrigation works made support of larger populations possible. The largest of these new states was the Chimú kingdom. Its capital Chan Chan, was an immense city spread over eight square miles, with houses made of molded adobe bricks which were grouped into large units or compounds. The Chimú kingdom survived until its conquest by the Inca in the mid-fifteenth century.

Although trade was widespread through the river systems and along the coast, transportation by land was more difficult. Roads were constructed to facilitate communication but the terrain did not make it easy. In addition the only draft animal on the entire continent was the llama, considerably less hardy than cattle, horses, and water buffalo used in much of Asia. Such problems undoubtedly hampered the development of regular contacts with distant societies in the Americas, as well as the exchange of goods and ideas that had enhanced civilization from China to the Mediterranean Sea.

Post-Classical Era

Mesoamerica

Toltecs—c. 900-1122 CE

Ultimately the great city of Teotihuacán was invaded and taken over by nomads from the north. The generic name for any group coming from the north to the Valley of Mexico was *Chichimecs*. The Toltecs were a group within the larger Chichimecs nomads. Mixcóalt was a great military leader who around 900 CE swept into the Valley of Mexico. He established his capital in Culhuacán near the shores of Lake Titicaca. Mixcóalt eventually was assassinated by his brother who seized control. Mixcóalt's pregnant wife fled into exile. Legend has it that she died giving birth to a son. His name was Ce Acatl Topiltzin (923-947) [Ce Acatl means "one reed"—year of his birth—and Topiltzin means "our prince."] He was raised away from Culhuacán and eventually studied in Xochicalco, another city-state in the Valley of Mexico. There he became a devoted follower of the god Quetzalcóalt. Legend says he the renamed himself Quetzalcóalt. Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt vowed to avenge his father's death and plotted to kill his uncle. Once he did that, he became king of the Toltecs.

In the aftermath of political upheaval, Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt moved the capital of his kingdom to Tula and founded the city in 968 CE. [For historians, Tula is the most significant city in the Valley of Mexico between the eras of Teotihuacán and Tenochtitlán.] During this time, the Toltecs took on much of the culture of the peoples living in the surrounding area of the Valley of Mexico. Tula's influence dominated the region for the next two hundred years and stories about Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt would float around and many myths about the god Quetzalcóalt would mix with the stories about Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt.

Despite the popularity of Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt, there were factions in the palace who resented the prominence of the worship of Quetzalcóalt and feared other gods like Tezcatlipoca (Jaguar Smoking Mirror) who demanded human sacrifice and human hearts. Devotion of Quetzalcóalt only needed sacrifices of butterflies, birds, or snakes or offerings of jade. One legend says that followers of Tezcatlipoca entered the house of Toplitzin-Quetzalcóalt (who was ill at the time). At first Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt refused the "medicine" which was pulque or alcohol in disguise. Eventually Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt drank it, found it pleasing, and asked for more. Soon he was drunk and fell into a stupor. He awoke naked the next morning in his sister's bed. Disgraced because he had broken his priestly vows and committed incest, he prepared to go into exile after reigning for twenty years. Legend has it that he left by way of Cholula with his followers. They were said to have headed for the sea. "He coasted down a river to the sea in a raft of serpents, after which he flashed into the heavens to become the morning star." The legend

continued that he sent word to the Toltecs that he would return from where the sun rose to take back his rightful throne in the year Ce Acatl.

Eventually Tula came under siege from area groups. By 1168 CE Tula's influence in the Valley of Mexico had weakened and there was a power vacuum in the region which opened up attempts by other invading groups to come from the north. The most powerful of those groups were the Mexica (the "x" has a "sh" sound—"MAY-she-ca"), later known as the Aztecs.

The Aztec Empire of Mexico--1325-1521

The Mexica were another group of the Chichimecs. They had migrated from the north to the Valley of Mexico because of the fertile land and opportunities for trade. Overtime, the region became dense with population to well over 25 million people at the time of Cortés's arrival. Competition for space and for power created much warfare.

Origins of the Aztecs. The Mexica wandered the region for several decades and took on the language and customs of the surrounding area. They developed a worship of Huitzilopochtli—god of war and the sun. They eventually ended up on the shores of Lake Texcoco because there was no space for them elsewhere. The surrounding city-states treated them as barbarians from the north.

Although barbarians in the eyes of others, they were excellent mercenaries, and this allowed them to eventually gain power. From 1270s to 1319 the Mexica maintained a precarious existence, occupying the hill of Chapultepec. Although they called themselves Mexica, overtime they became known as the Aztecs, referencing their mythical homeland to the north. They were subject to the ruler Coxcox, the ruler of Culhuacán. To gain favor with Coxcox, the Aztec fought one of Culhuacán's enemy cities. The Aztecs brought back sacks containing 8,000 ears to prove their victory. In reward, Coxcox gave them their freedom and better land. The Aztecs convinced Coxcox to give his daughter to become an Aztec queen. However, they took the princess, sacrificed her, and flayed her. Later, "When her father attended the banquet in his honor, he was horrified to find that the entertainment included a priest-dancer dressed in the skin of his daughter." (Sherman) Needless to say, Coxcox attacked and the Aztecs were scattered and took refuge in the reeds of Lake Texcoco.

Spread of Aztec Power. No one had wanted to live near Lake Texcoc. The land was vacant in the reeds and more-easily cultivable land was so much better elsewhere. Aztec legends declared that they decided to stay because of a sign from the gods. An eagle with a rattlesnake in its mouth landed on a cactus [future symbol on the Mexican flag] indicated it was the place to stay. Developing a permanent settlement there showed great ingenuity and adaptability. The Aztecs found a partial island and began dredging and building aqueducts. This island became the city of Tenochtitlán and the foundation of Aztec society began in 1325.

By 1426 at the death of Tezozómoc, the ruler of Tepanec, the Aztecs had gained enough power to enter into an alliance with two other city-states. The Triple Alliance consisted of Tenochtitlán, Tlacopán, and Texcoco. The Aztecs continued to flourish and gain more dominance in the region. In 1440, Moctezuma I (r. 1440-1469) became the ruler of the Aztecs and reigned for twenty-eight years. He was a great general and his military strength extended the power of the Aztecs. He was succeeded by his brother Axayácatl (r. 1469-1481).

For most of the 15th century, the Aztecs consolidated their control over much of what is modern Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, and as far south as the Guatemalan

border. To provide unifying focus for this fledgling empire, the Aztecs promoted their patron god, Huitzilopochtli, as the guiding deity for the entire population. In general the Aztecs incorporated much of the culture and language of the peoples already settled in the Valley of Mexico. Politically the Aztec ruler was advised by a small council of lords which also served as a bureaucracy. Beyond the capital, the power of the central government was limited. Rulers of territories subject to the Aztecs were allowed considerable autonomy in return for paying tribute in the form of goods or captives, to the central government. The most important government officials in the provinces were the tax collectors, who collected the tribute. They used the threat of military action against those who failed to carry out tribute obligations.

Aztec Social Hierarchy. Positions in the government bureaucracy were the exclusive privilege of the hereditary nobility, all of whom traced their lineage to the founding family of the Aztec clan. The majority of the population consisted of commoners, indentured servants, and slaves. The commoners were members of large kinship groups called *capullis*. Each *capulli* was headed by an elected chief who ran its day-to-day affairs and served as an intermediary with the central government. Each *capulli* was responsible for providing taxes (usually in the form of goods) and conscript labor to the state. Classes in Aztec society were rigidly stratified. Commoners were not permitted to enter the nobility, although there were some case of commoners rising to senior positions in the military or priesthood.

Aztec Religion. The syncretic nature of Aztec polytheism incorporated many gods and goddesses from earlier Mesoamerica cultures such as the Olmecs and the Mayans. Aztec religion was based on the belief in the existence of two worlds, the material and the divine. Human beings could aspire to form a heavenly salvation but had to go through a type of judgment. To prepare for the passage people underwent religious training at temples schools. In an effort to postpone the day of reckoning, the Aztecs practiced human sacrifice. The Aztecs believed that by appeasing the sun god, Huitzilopochtli, with sacrifices, they could delay the final destruction of their world. Victims were prepared for the ceremony through elaborate rituals and then brought to the temple where their hearts were ripped out of their chests and presented to the gods as a holy offering. By the time of Moctezuma II (b. 1466-1520) the demand for victims for human sacrifices had exploded. The purpose of warfare had transformed from gaining territory and killing their opponents to having more tribute payers and victims for human sacrifice. Moctezuma ascended the throne in 1502.

The seat of power of the Aztec Empire was Tenochtitlán which had begun as swampy land in the middle of Lake Texcoco and grew to be a city of nearly 200,000 people by the time of European arrival. Only four cities in Europe had that many people at the same time (Paris, Venice, Milan, and Naples). The largest city in Spain, Seville, only had 40,000 inhabitants. The Valley of Mexico was one of the most densely populated places on earth at that time.

South America- Andes Mountains

The Inca—1438-1533

In the late 14th century, the Inca [so called after their own name for the ruling lineage] were a small community in the area near Cuzco, a city located at an altitude of 10,000 feet in the Andes highlands. Previous empires, Moche, Tiahuanco, and Chimú, no doubt provided the Incas

with instructive precedents for conquest and consolidation of military and political power as well as cultural elements. Like other imperialist nations of past, the Incas had myths and legends which described divine origins to their rulers.

Intense imperial expansion seemed to have begun around the middle of the fifteenth century in the reign of Pachacuti Inca (r. 1438-1472). Together with his son Topa Yupanqui Inca (b. 1430-1493), Pachacuti subdued many of the provinces by the skillfully dividing loyalties, making promises, threats, and brute force. Reputed to be a great organizer as well as a mighty warrior, Pachacuti is credited with many reforms and innovations, including the establishment of territorial divisions and an elaborate administrative bureaucracy that in time made the Inca Empire work efficiently. By 1527 the Inca had gained control as far north as modern day frontier between Ecuador and Colombia and to the Maule River in Chile to the south. Approximately 9 million people gave their allegiance to the Inca emperor.

The empire, called Twantinsuyu, or "world of the four quarters," divided further into provinces and districts. Each province contained about ten thousand residents and was ruled by a governor related to the royal family. The capital, Cuzco, was divided into four quarters and social status dictated which quarter to reside in.

The state was built on forced labor called *mita*. Often entire communities of workers were moved from one part of the empire to another to open new lands or replace rebellious populations. The Incas also maintained their authority by spreading the Quechua language (still spoken by the majority of descents) as the official language of the empire, the imposition of a unifying state religion, and a clever policy of incorporating chiefs of conquered regions into the central bureaucracy. An excellent network of Inca roads and footpaths linked administrative centers and made it possible to send armies and messengers quickly from one part of the empire to the other. Rest houses and storage depots were placed along the roads. Suspension bridges made of braided fiber and fastened to stone abutments on the opposite banks were built over ravines and waterways. Trained runners carried messages rapidly from one way station to another, enabling information to travel up to 140 miles in a single day.

The Inca did not develop a system of writing but they did possess a very efficient means of keeping records in a memory aid called the *quipu*. It was a stick with knotted string held together and were able to record numerical data. The practice was apparently not invented by the Inca. Fragments of *quipu* have been found at Caral and dated approximately five thousand years ago. Strings of different colors represented different articles, people, or districts; knots tied in the string marked off in units representing ones, tens, hundreds, thousands, and so on.

The economic basis of the Inca Empire was its intensive irrigation agriculture capable of supporting not only those farmers producing the food but large Inca armies, a large administrative bureaucracy, and artisans and priests. To extend arable land, terracing was constructed and allowed fields to lay fallow to maintain fertility. Agricultural implements were few and simple. They consisted primarily of a foot plow for breaking up the soil and digging holes for planting and a hoe with a bronze blade for general cultivation. The potato and quinoa were staple crops in the higher valleys; corn was the principal crop in the lower altitudes.

The basic unit of Inca social organization was the *ayllu*—a kinship group whose members claimed descent from a common ancestor and married within the group. The members of the *ayllu* sought to aid one another in tasks beyond what a single household could manage. A village community typically consisted of several *ayllu*, who owned certain lands assigned in lots to the heads of families. A practice of mutual help associations developed in the village communities. Eventually the Inca rulers took over the communal principle and utilized it for

their own ends in the form of *mita*—unpaid, forced labor. The construction and mountainous of roads in the empire and storage buildings for surplus food was maintained by *mita* labor.

The relations between the Inca and the peasantry drew on the principle of reciprocity, expressed in an elaborate system of gifts and counter gifts. The peasantry cultivated the lands of the Inca, weaved his alpaca wool and cotton into cloth, and performed various other kinds of labor for him. The Inca—the divine, universal lord—in turn permitted the peasantry to cultivate communal lands and, in time of shortages, released to the villages the surplus grain in his storehouse. (Keen) This exchange was one sided and the labor fell heavily on the peasants, but the hold of this ideology with effect interactions with Europeans in the future.

On the eve of Spanish conquest, the Inca state appeared all-powerful, but like the Aztec empires, this masked deep contradictions. It faced frequent revolts by conquered peoples that were suppressed with cruelty.

Stateless Cultures in the Americas

Focusing on the regions of Mesoamerica and the highlands of the Andes Mountains in the study of pre-Columbian Americas perpetuates the Eurocentric concept that the rest of the continent was empty. However, numerous groups inhabited the entire Americas. Historians of pre-Columbian Americas distinguish between sedentary, semi-sedentary, and non-sedentary indigenous groups. At the time of European arrival in the Americas, the Aztec and Inca are the best example of a sedentary group. Europeans targeted those groups to conquer and exploit at first because they were rich civilizations which could produce relatively quick economic rewards. The semi-sedentary groups would be the peoples that lived on the periphery of the sedentary groups that moved seasonally and aimed to be out of the political power and military strength of the sedentary groups like the Inca and Aztecs. An example of that would be the Arawak who lived north of the Incan territory. The non-sedentary groups were more like the groups in Amazonia and subsisted by hunting and gathering.

Conclusion

Human migrations from Asia in to the Americans began during the Upper-Paleolithic sometime between 25 and 12 KYA that is, between the northern hemisphere's Last Glacial Maximum (LGM, 25 KYA) some 25 KYA and our last Ice Age (12 KYA). Society, culture, and civilization in Latin America developed as early as 2,000 BCE as some of the inhabitants of the Americans underwent their own form of Neolithic Transition. Although maize agriculture, animal domestication, village life and other hallmarks of Neolithic societies emerged and took firm root primarily in Mesoamerica, no widespread metal technologies developed prior to the arrival of European Peoples. American civilizations were located mostly in large area between central Mexico/Mesoamerica in the north to the Upper Amazon basin and the Andean/Pacific regions. Between about 2000 BCE and 1521 a number of complex culture and great civilizations emerged in Latin America. Unfortunately, few thrived and many went extinct following the arrival of conquering and colonizing Europeans in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 20

European Conquest and Hegemony in Latin America

"We Spaniards know a sickness of heart that only gold can cure"
—Francisco Pizarro

The arrival of Europeans in the Americas after 1492 disrupted, co-opted, or destroyed pre-existing indigenous cultures and civilizations. This chapter will trace both the conquest and then the material and social hegemony of Europeans in Latin America. In contrast to Africa—in which there were significant groups of European colonists in selected areas of the continent—the Americas particularly from modern Mexico to the south, became *Latin* America through extensive and profound colonization and transformation of the modes and means of production (mining, plantation agriculture, and so forth). The Voyages of Christopher Colombus, from a Spanish Perspective, perhaps one of the most productive mistakes in history (Columbus thought he was in China). Through subsequent Spanish conquests, particularly those of Hernán Cortés, in Mexico and Francisco Pizarro in the regions of Peru, as well as the incorporation of the Amazon Basin under Portuguese control, the continent of South America, all of Mesoamerica, Mexico, the Caribbean, and regions of what are now the United States were deeply transformed to this day. Europe, likewise, was transformed. The influx of "New World" gold and silver destroyed entire economies through inflation, and changed the continental arrangement of power. Diet and disease with likewise affected through the Columbian Exchange. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the effect of the European discovery of the Americans is the second most profound era of human history, second only to the Neolithic Agricultural Revolution.

Columbus's First Voyages to the Americas—1492, 1493, 1498, 1502

A pivotal figure in the history of Spanish exploration was an Italian from Genoa, Christopher Columbus (1451-1506). A search for a sea road to the lucrative spice trade in Southeast Asia inspired more than one solution. Because all educated Europeans believed the world was round that question never entered into the debate between Columbus and his opponents. The main issue was the extent of the ocean between Europe and Asia. About 1484, Columbus, who then lived in Lisbon, Portugal, offered to make a western voyage to investigate the possibility of a western route to the Indies. Prince John II of Portugal refused his offer. After being rejected by the Portuguese, he persuaded Queen Isabella of Spain to finance his exploration expedition, which reached the Americas in October 1492 and explored the coastline of Cuba and northern shores of the neighboring island of Hispaniola. Columbus believed he had reached the East Indies and in three subsequent voyages (1493, 1498, and 1502) sought in vain to find a route through the outer islands to the Asian mainland.

Although Columbus maintained his belief that he had reached Asia, other navigators realized that he had reached new lands. With backing from various European monarchs, explorers sent out to "discover" what they came to call the "New World." The continent of South America was discovered accidently by the Portuguese sea captain Pedro Cabral in 1500. Settlements were established in Hispaniola and adventurers came to find their fame and fortune. However, it soon became clear that the Caribbean region offered no silks or spices for the

European market. If Spanish settlers wanted to maintain their foothold in the Caribbean, they needed to find a way to support themselves.

Conquest of Mexico—1519-1522

The settlers on Hispaniola and Cuba first attempted to support their society by mining gold. Spanish settlers were few in number and were not inclined to perform heavy labor, so they recruited the labor they needed from the native population of Tainos. This was accomplished through an institution that would later be present in many locations in Latin America: the *encomienda*. Spanish settlers were given the right to compel Tainos to work in their mines and fields. In return for their labor, *encomenderos* were supposed to look after their workers' welfare and facilitate their conversion to Christianity.

In 1518 a disturbing report reached the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán. Up from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico a tribute collector rushed to inform Moctezuma II of the approach from the sea of winged towers bearing men with white faces and heavy beards. Before departing, the mysterious visitors had promised, according to the tribute collector, to return soon and visit their king in his city. Aztec accounts agree that the news filled Moctezuma II with confusion. Could the leader of these strangers be the Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt that had left in disgraced but vowed to return to reclaim his kingdom? The appearance of the ships coincided with the year Ce Atal, the year Topiltzin-Quetzalcóalt had claimed he would return. The "winged towers" were the ships of Spanish captain Juan de Grijalva, sent by Governor Diego Velásquez of Cuba to explore the coasts and find more indigenous slaves.

Arrival of Cortés

In February 1519 a Spanish expedition under the command of Hernán Cortés, sailed to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. Cortés (1485-1547) had arrived on Hispaniola when he was nineteen years old and had spent the next decade fighting rebellious indigenous groups and had gained invaluable military experience. He obtained permission from the Governor of Cuba to explore the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico and trade with the people there but not to travel inland. Cortés's ships first touched land at the island of Cozumel, where they found a Spanish castaway, Jerónimo de Aguilar, who had lived among the Maya for eight years. In March 1519, Cortés landed on the coast of Tabasco, defeated local natives in a skirmish, and secured from them a number of indigenous girls for the Spanish. One of them was Malintzin, or later more commonly known as La Malinche. (c.1501-1529) She was born in the Aztec empire and learned Nahuatl as a child but was sold into slavery to groups in the south. There she learned to speak Maya. She soon became invaluable to the Spanish to interpret and give advice on the customs and thoughts of the Aztecs. Malintzin easily learned Spanish and became Cortés's most trusted confidant and mistress.

In a bold move, Cortés scuttled his ships and with Malintzin at his side with 600 men, he headed inland. Cortés had shortly learned that many groups feared and hated the Aztecs. The Tlaxcalans were traditional enemies of the Aztecs. Cortés won the Tlaxcalan's favor when the Spanish destroyed their neighboring enemy in Cholula. Tlaxacalan became allies with the Spanish to take on the Aztecs. News of this military victory had reached Moctezuma II. Moctezuma II seem paralyzed with indecision as to how to deal with the Spanish. Moctezuma ended up welcoming Cortés at the entrance to Tenochtitlán as a rightful ruler returning to his throne.

Conquest of Tenochtitlán

But tensions soon erupted between the Spanish and the Aztecs, provoked by Cortés's demand for more gold and for the Aztecs to renounce their religion and become Christians. When the Spanish took Moctezuma hostage and began to destroy Aztec temples, the local population revolted and drove the conquistadors from the city. On June 30, 1520 the Aztecs attacked the palace where the Spanish where were staying in Tenochtitlán and the Spanish fled across the aqueducts. The Aztecs destroyed parts of bridges and many Spanish drowned in the waters of Lake Texcoco. The Spanish refer to it as *La noche triste*—the Night of Sorrows—as so many Spanish were trapped in the city. Cortés had left the city earlier to finally obtain royal permission for his quest to conquer Mexico. When he returned and found his fledging group of conquistadors that escaped from Tenochtitlán, his first inquiry was for Martín, the shipbuilder. Strengthened by the arrival of Spanish reinforcements from Cuba and by thousands of indigenous enemies of the Aztec empire, Cortés again marched on Tenochtitlán by land and by lake in December 1520. The Spanish laid siege on the city and cut off any supplies to the island starving the population. For four months the Aztecs fought back but on August 23, 1521 the last Aztec king, Cuauhtémoc, surrendered. Cortés took possession of the ruins and soon established Mexico City.

From the Valley of Mexico, the process of conquest extended in all directions. Pedro de Alvarado conquered Guatemala and Cortés continued on and subdued Honduras. In 1527, Francisco de Montejo began the conquest of Yucatán, but as late as 1542, the Maya rose in a revolt that was crushed with huge loss of life.

Consolidation of Spanish rule after Cortés

For a brief time, Cortés was the undisputed master of the old Aztec empire, renamed the "Kingdom of New Spain." He made grants of *encomienda* to his soldiers, reserving for himself the tributes of the richest towns and provinces. Eventually the crown grew distrustful of Cortés and wanted to reestablish itself as the ruling power in the New World. The crown removed Cortés from his office as governor, rested the power in an *audiencia* (high court), and chose another viceroy from Spain. In 1539 Cortés returned to Spain and served with distinction in an expedition against Algiers the following year. However, the king did not favor Cortés. He retired and lived in seclusion in Seville. He died in 1547 leaving his title and estates to his eldest legitimate son, Martín Cortés.

Conquest of Peru, 1532-1550

The news of the exploits of Cortés and the other conquistadors in Mexico ignited the imagination and greed in other men to find their fame and fortune in the New World. Explorers had found their way across the Isthmus of Panama and traveled to the Pacific Ocean. Exploratory ventures had produced favorable results with gold and silver artifacts to confirm that another civilization existed to the south. Francisco Pizarro (c. 1476-1541) was an illiterate, poor soldier from Trujillo, Spain who had found himself in the explorations across the Isthmus of Panama. He gained enough favor with fellow soldiers to secure a commission. In 1531 he gained royal approval for an expedition to Peru. Accompanied by his four brothers and other followers, 168 men set out to find the source of wealth of the mysterious civilization that they had received reports.

Incan Civil War

Meanwhile in the Inca Empire, civil war had been raging for the nearly five years. The ruling Inca, Huayna Capac (b. 1464-1527) had masterfully governed the empire keeping Inca power strong and increasing its wealth. Long before Francisco Pizarro and other conquistadors journeyed to Cuzco, waves of small pox had hit the region. Huayna Capac died unexpectedly from the disease and left a power vacuum for who was to become his successor. The rightful heir was Huáscar (b. 1491-1533) and he claimed the throne and began to reign. His brother Atahualpa (b. 1502-1533) challenged Huáscar. Battles between armies lead by the brothers numbered over 120,000 warriors. Atahualpa's troops triumphed over those loyal to Huáscar in the Battles of Chimborazo and Quipaipan, and Atahualpa imprisoned his brother. At the time of Pizarro's arrival in Peru, Atahualpa was recovering from the war at the springs in Caja Marca, some days journey from the Inca capital of Cuzco. Atahualpa's forces were depleted after a long bloody civil war and many groups throughout the empire were still loyal to his brother.

Pizarro and the Conquest of Peru

When Pizarro and his men arrived on the outskirts of Caja Marca, Atahualpa had been receiving news about the Spanish. Scouts reported that the swords that the Spanish were carrying were no more dangerous than weaving batters. The firearms could only fire two shots and that the horses were powerless at night. The reports painted a picture of the Spanish as lunatics because they carried metal pots on their heads but did not cook with them. The scouts recommended that all of them should be killed except for the blacksmith, horse wrangler, and the barber. Why the barber? All who entered his tent looked tired and old and those who came out emerged freshly shaven, looking much younger. Atahualpa underestimated the strength and power of the Spanish.

Perhaps in direct imitation of Cortés, Pizarro planned to win a quick and relatively bloodless victory by seizing the Inca Atahualpa, through whom he hoped to rule the empire, just as Cortés had done with Moctezuma II. "If Moctezuma's undoing was his passive acceptance of the divinity of the invaders, Atahualpa's mistake was to underestimate the massed striking power of the small Spanish force." (Keen) Atahualpa had soldiers camped on the hillsides near Caja Marca but did not order them to the town for protection.

In the early morning of November 17, 1532, Pizarro and his men had found the town deserted and took up hidden positions around the square. Atahualpa left his camp around midday, preceded by a large number of men in ceremonial attire. As the procession advanced slowly, the priest Vicente de Valverde came forward and spoke to the Inca in Spanish about the Christian God and Spanish king. Atahualpa did not understand. The priest handed Atahualpa a Bible and the angry emperor threw it to the ground. At a signal from Pizarro, his soldiers rushed forward to kill hundreds and take the Inca ruler hostage.

Atahualpa begged for his freedom and offered the Spanish a ransom. The ransom was to fill his cell to where his hand reached up high. Soon hundreds of llamas bearing gold and silver were filing into Cuzco. The room was 22 feet by 17 feet by 8 feet. The room was filled with gold and twice as much silver. It was estimated to be roughly 13,000 pounds of gold alone. While Atahualpa was imprisoned in Cuzco, he order his brother Huáscar to be killed so that the Spanish would not use him to break is hold over the people. The Spanish did not honor the bargain and Atahualpa was executed on 26 July1533.

The ransom was a huge fortune. After the royal fifth (one-fifth of the total amount) was taken out to be given to the crown. The rest of the booty was divided up between the 168 men of the expedition. According to rank and responsibility, men were given a certain amount of shares.

The lowest soldier received one share which consisted of 45 pounds of gold and 90 pounds of silver. In today's money the gold alone would be worth half a million dollars. Pizarro received 14 shares. The Spanish implanted themselves over a system that the Inca had produced. Although Pizarro and his men had conquered and became wealthy, the mafia-like control over the group continued to fester arguments. Most the members of the expedition were either assassinated by their own members or killed in skirmishes within ten years.

Colonial Latin America: Establishing a European Hegemony in the Americas

In a relatively short amount of time the Spanish were able to establish permanent footholds in the Americas. The centers of their power corresponded to the empires that they had conquered: The colony of New Spain in Mexico with the capital Mexico City and colony of Peru in Lima. The Spanish were unable to subdue most indigenous groups and most of the semi-sedentary and non-sedentary groups continued to fight against European settlement. The strength of the crown slowly but surely incorporated more and more territory as Europeans came to exploit the resources and products produced in the New World.

The Columbian Exchange

With the arrival of Europeans to the shores of the Americas initiated a process of cross-cultivation of plants and animals that had never been seen in both the New and Old Worlds. Aztec warriors had never seen a horse; Spanish conquistadors were unfamiliar with foods like potatoes and corn. Historian Alfred Crosby coined the term Colombian Exchange to describe the collision of biological differences. He argued that it was one of the most significant events in the history of world ecology, agriculture, and culture. Along with the plants and animals came other biological elements: disease. Because of the Americas' isolation from the rest of the world, the peoples did not carry the same immunities to diseases. Waves of small pox and measles would continually run through the population for years to come. The civil war among the Inca just before the arrival of Francisco Pizarro is an example of the Columbian Exchange. The devastating effects of disease can also be seen in the Valley of Mexico. When Cortés arrived in 1519 there were over 25 million inhabitants in the region. One hundred years later by 1620, the number of indigenous people had shrunk by ninety percent to fewer than 2 million.

Although disease was the main culprit of the depopulation, exploitation of indigenous labor did not curb the downfall. Soon after the surrender of Cuauhtémoc, Cortés established the same *encomienda* system that had been practiced in Hispaniola. The crown endorsed the system which permitted the Spanish to collect tribute from the native population and use them as laborers. In return, the holders of the encomienda were supposed to protect the villagers and supervise their spiritual and material needs. In practice, that meant that settlers were free to implement the system as they pleased. Without oversight from royal administrations some three thousand miles away, many abuses were common. The *encomienda* system was also established in Peru. Overtime, with the devastation to the indigenous population due to disease and cruel treatment, the *encomienda* system faded. *Encomenderos* left the *encomiendas* to their heirs but the amount of production diminished as the population did. In addition, the crown in Spain wanted to gain more control over the management of the colonial administration and discouraged new allotments of *encomiendas* although the practice was not completely abolished until 1720.

Mining in Colonial Latin America

Latin America was largely an agricultural society which eighty percent of the population lived and worked on the land. Yet in terms of America's importance to Spain, mining was the principal source of royal revenue in the form of the *quinto* (the royal one-fifth of all gold, silver or other precious metals obtained in the Americas). The major silver discoveries were made in Mexico and Peru between 1545 and 1565. Silver was the most lucrative metal rather than gold. The most productive mines were in Potosí (now in Bolivia) and Zacatecas in Mexico. Mining labor was provided by a variety of workers. The early use of indigenous slaves and *encomienda* workers in the 16th century gradually was replaced by a system of labor drafts. By 1572 the mining ***mita*** in Peru was providing about 13,000 workers a year to Potosí alone. The Spanish tapped into the *mita*, a labor system used under the Incas for communal and state projects. However, the Spanish did not reciprocate benefits to the indigenous workers. The forced labor eventually moved towards wage labor by the late 1600s.

Although indigenous methods were used at first, most mining techniques were European in origin. In late the 1500s, silver mining depended on a process of amalgamation with mercury to extract the silver from the ore rock. The Spanish discovery of a mountain of mercury at Huancavelica in Peru aided American silver production.

According to Spanish law, all subsoil rights belonged to the crown, but the mines and the processing plants were owned by individuals, who were permitted to extract silver in retuning one-fifth of production to the government, which also profited from the monopoly on the mercury needed to produce silver. (Stearns) Much of the silver ended up in China as Spain wanted to buy goods produced in China and silver was the primary item Chinese were willing to exchange for their silk and porcelain. The Manila Galleon trade route was established between Acapulco, Mexico and Manila, Philippines. The Philippines were controlled by the Spanish and offered a more direct route to the lucrative trade from China and functioned from 1565 to 1815.

Haciendas and Plantations in Colonial Latin America

Spanish and Portuguese America remained predominantly an agrarian economy and wherever large sedentary populations lived, indigenous communal agriculture of traditional crops continued. As populations dwindled, Spanish ranches and farms began to emerge. These rural estates, or haciendas, produced primarily for consumers in the Americas.

A departure from the hacienda system began in Brazil. Once Pedro Alvares Cabral had accidently landed on the shores of Brazil, the Portuguese explorers had tried to find a similar group of indigenous people to exploit as had been done by Cortés and Pizarro. However, the regions where the Portuguese landed did not contain sedentary groups and thus little to exploit. The Portuguese crown ignored Brazil for over thirty years as they concentrated on the eastern routes to the East Indies. Since there was no easy labor to co-opt for forced labor, Portuguese began importing slave labor from Africa. By the early 1600s, African slaves were being brought in to work on developing sugar plantations. Sugar was introduced to Brazil and it was a lucrative product to sell in Europe. During the next century, Brazil was the world's leading sugar producer. The production of sugar was a labor intensive and lengthy process that required back breaking and dangerous work. Sugar cane had to be cut at the harvest and within 48 hours begin processing. Canes where pressed to extract the sugar liquid and then boiled for days to refine the liquid. In the end the process created blocks of hard brown sugar that would be transported to Europe. The production of sugar took place in what the Brazilians called *engenhos* or sugar mills. During the 17th century about 7,000 slaves a year where imported from Africa to work in

the sugar plantations and *engenhos*. By the end of the century, Brazil had about 150,000 slave—about half of its population.

Life expectancy of African slaves arriving in Brazil in the 17th and 18th centuries was a horrifying 3 to 5 years. Slave owners literally worked the slaves to death, arguing it was more economical to do so and buy new slaves rather than maintain a slave population. Resistance to such deplorable conditions was evident by the numerous advertisements in the newspapers for the capture of runaway slaves. In Brazil and other slave holding regions, slaves also resisted by escaping the plantations and creating runaway slave communities in the jungles and swamps not controlled by the colonial government. These runaway slave communities, or *quilombos* or maroons created their own political system and were self-sufficient from outside powers. Colonials governments sought to destroy these refuges but they survived far into the 19th century.

Imperial Colonial System in Latin America

Both Spain and Portugal developed a colonial governing system which aimed to control the people in the colonies but because of distance from Europe and the lack of royal administers rarely functioned as outlined. The colonies were governed by a viceroy appointed by the crown and an *audiencia* or court. The Spanish government faced real problems of control stemming from distance, time, and the constant difficulty of controlling both settlers and officials. To solve this they created a strong authoritarian structure, but as a matter of practice, power and decisions were widely shared. The crown distrusted those Spanish or Portuguese who were born in the colonies because they often worked to gain profits by circumventing government decrees. All top leadership in the colonies had to be Spanish and Portuguese born in Europe. Historians refer to those as *peninsulares*, or folks from the Iberian Peninsula. The Spanish or Portuguese born in the Americas were called *criollos*, or creoles. The tension between these groups fluctuated but by the end of the 18th century, seeds of discontent were fueled among the *criollos* which lead to independence movements.

The colonial system was not designed to be efficient. Mercantilism was the economic guiding principles for European countries and they structured the system so that Spain or Portugal would receive the most revenue. Technically all merchandise had to be sent to Spain before it could sold elsewhere. Piracy flourished in the Caribbean Sea as fleets of ships sailing with silver and sugar gathered to make the journey to Seville.

Because there was little oversight, colonial officials, whether *peninsulares* or *criollos*, often ignored regulations. A common phrase describes the paradigm, "*Obedezco pero no cumplo.*"—"I obey but do not comply." In other words, officials would say they were fulfilling the law to give loyalty to the crown, but would look the other way to make profits for themselves or their cronies.

The Catholic Church in Latin America

To be Spanish in the colonial times was to be Catholic. The Catholic Church played a leading role in the "spiritual" conquest and the acculturation of indigenous groups far from the centers of colonial Spanish rule. The Church was perhaps the major culture bearer in bringing European culture to the Americas. Partly the culture was material, i.e., the skills, animals, crops, etc. of Europe were introduced. Partly the church changed, at least to some small degree, the religious consciousness of indigenous peoples and African slaves. However, some elements of the native and Africans religions survived. But as the European part of the population grew, the church served as educator and custodian of values and over time grew very powerful.

Initially the missions to the Americas started with sedentary groups like the Aztecs. Missionaries in league with the conquistadors would forcibly end old cults but would tolerate syncretism. The church provided protection, advocacy, and assistance to the newly converted villages. Missionaries would also use indigenous social discipline, i.e., chief's power to convert. Conversion of semi-sedentary and non-sedentary groups happened later. After 1550 the mission system developed. Europeans would establish a center of European culture. They would then entice the indigenous groups to abandon nomadism and live in small villages. They would introduce agriculture, livestock raising, wood, iron, leather, ceramic work, spinning, weaving, etc. The missionaries would build a church and introduce mass. Often they would learn the particular indigenous language and begin teaching.

The clergy of the church was organized into two groups. The regular clergy were the organized orders like Jesuits, Franciscans, etc. The regular clergy tended to be *peninsulares*, born and educated in Spain and Portugal and followed strict regulations of the orders. Secular clergy were primarily *criollos*, born in the Americas and were the parish priests who had direct contact with the common folk. They heard confessions, took care of birth, death, and marriage records and usually accepted vows of poverty, obedience, and charity. The church grew in power economically because they often received lands donated to them when there wasn't an heir.

The church affected the daily lives of the peoples in the Americas far more than the colonial authorities. Without the cultural influence of the church, the Spanish and Portuguese would never have been able to keep a stronghold of power. However, conversion was not just a one way street. By nature of things many aspects of old indigenous religious practices remained intact. Many secret practices continued. Sometimes roles where combined like the worship of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Religious **syncretism** takes place when foreign beliefs are introduced to an indigenous belief system and the two teachings are blended. The newly formed religion then takes a shape of its own. For example the peasant Juan Diego near Mexico City in 1531 claimed to receive a vision of a brown skinned virgin on Tepeyac Hill. The conquered Aztecs and other indigenous groups incorporated elements of their worship into the reverence for Virgin of Guadalupe.

Society of Castas and Miscegenation in Latin America

Overtime the Latin American colonial governments desired to create a highly rigid social structure to maintain order. In reality, European, indigenous, and African ethnic groups mingled in Latin America and brought about cultural blending. The Spanish wanted a hierarchical society with the Spanish (whites) at the top with everyone else, in theory, kept in his or her place. This system was known to the Spanish as the Society of Castas. *Casta* refers to the class or caste into which each person was born. The purpose was to keep each person in their respective "place," keeping order in society. But several factors acted to break down the rigidity of classes. There were relatively few Spanish women in the Americas. The opportunities for sexual exploitation of indigenous and African women were very high as most of the native women or African slaves were controlled by the Spanish. And an economic element fueled the blurring of the rigid social strata. As fortunes came and went easily, many Spanish or Portuguese men could not afford to bring Spanish and Portuguese women and cohabitated with native women. As the Spanish domination proceeded, mestization grew broader. Spanish lower class immigrants, generally found mates or wives among indigenous or Mestizo women. Gradually there grew up a complex intermediate middle group of people neither European, Indian, nor African.

Spanish were at the top with political power with American born Spanish like landowners and merchants followed. Mestizos, often white fathers with indigenous mothers formed the next level and then on to mulattos. At the bottom where Indians and slaves. The Spanish tried to enumerate these different levels and had names for those who had various degrees of indigenous or African parentage. However, with time the miscegenation of peoples created blurred physical features. How would a mestizo differ from those who had grandparents who were part white but also African? The boundaries between groups were blurred by wealth, advantageous marriages, and motivation. Folks from the lower classes could move up the social ladder if they "whitened" themselves by gaining fortunes. Their skin color would not change but the perception of their heritage had change. But make no mistakes, the social strata was complicated and permeable but real color lines existed.

The rigid social structure also involved gender. Women occupied a clearly subordinate role in colonial Latin America. The father of the family had legal authority over his children until they were 25. Women were in a subordinate position; they could not serve in the government and were expected to assume the duties of motherhood and household. After marriage, women came under the direction of her family, but many widows assumed the direction of her family's affairs. Lower-class women often controlled small scale commerce in towns and villages and worked the fields. Marriages often were arranged and accompanied by the payment of a dowry, which remained the property of the woman throughout the marriage. Some upper class women who did not marry at a young age were placed in convents to prevent contacts or marriages with partners of unsuitable backgrounds. (Stearns) Despite these limitations, some women pursued intellectual endeavors. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (b. 1651-1695) is one of the most famous poets of the colonial era in Mexico. She was born in humble circumstances to unwed parents but came to the attention of the viceroy and his wife and took her into their home. Her thirst for knowledge and study led her to reject the traditional customs of marriage and she opted to enter a convent in 1669. She strayed from the normal religious studies and delved into science and literature. Sor Juana was able to build a substantial library, read and wrote, and socialized with many of the important people of the day. In one of her most famous poems, "Of Men's Hypocrisy," Sor Juana challenged the notion that men could seduce women with impunity and women suffer the shame. She rejected the double standards for men and called for those traditions to end. However, the hegemony of church and social structure caught up with Sor Juana. She was forced to give up her library and devote herself to charitable work and acts of penance. A plague swept through Mexico in 1695, and she died in the convent.

Colonial Latin America from 1750

By the 18th century it was clear that the Spanish and Portuguese colonial system had become outmoded and that particularly Spain's exclusive hold on the Indies was no longer secure. To some extent the problem lay in Spain itself. It was suffering from foreign wars, increasing debt, declining population, and internal revolts. Groups in Latin America began to bristle against the economic controls of the colonial governments. In the late 1700s the Spanish with the Bourbon Reforms and the Portuguese with the Pombal Reforms aimed to regain control of the colonies. Changing attitudes within Europe and revolutions demonstrating the potential success led to seeds of independence. However, the break with Portugal and Spain would not occur until the 1830s.

Conclusion

The Conquest and Latinization of the Americas is one of the most significant events in human history. Not only were indigenous peoples deeply affected, local governments destroyed, society reconfigured, and modes and means of production altered in the Americas, but the Columbian Exchange produced profound changes in the "Old World" as well. Contemporary historians and scientists wonder if globalization and climate change will not, at some time in the future, be known, together with the conquest of Latin America and the Neolithic Revolutions, as a decisive turning point in human society, and to the most ardent among those concerned abut current nuclear weapons stockpiles, the very existence of humanity itself.